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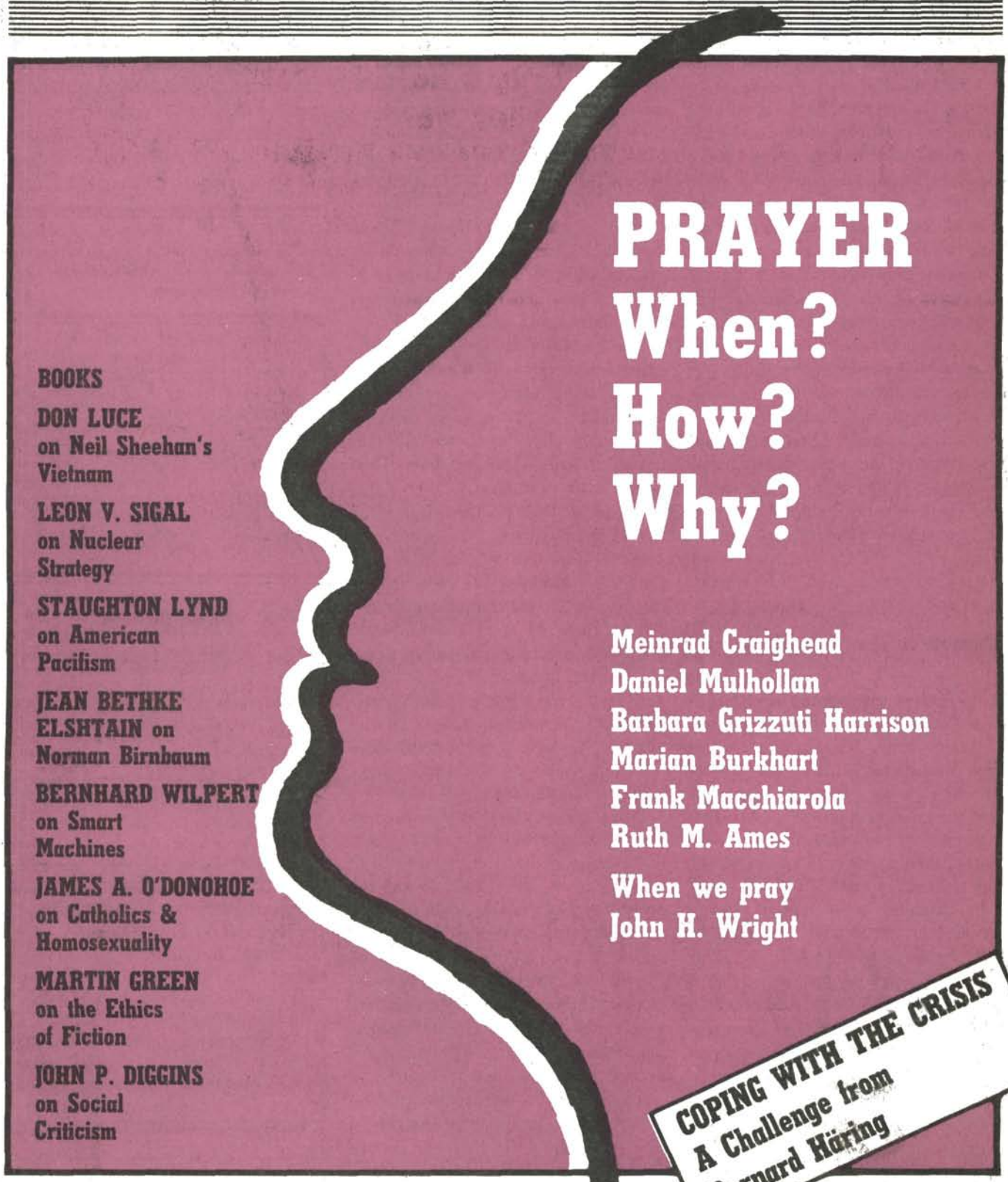

PRAYER
When?
How?
Why?

Meinrad Craighead
Daniel Mulhollan
Barbara Grizzuti Harrison
Marian Burkhart
Frank Macchiarola
Ruth M. Ames

When we pray
John H. Wright

COPING WITH THE CRISIS
A Challenge from
Bernard Häring

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on Neil Sheehan's
Vietnam

LEON V. SIGAL
on Nuclear
Strategy

STAUGHTON LYND
on American
Pacifism

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on Smart
Machines

JAMES A. O'DONOHOE
on Catholics &
Homosexuality

MARTIN GREEN
on the Ethics
of Fiction

JOHN P. DIGGINS
on Social
Criticism

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CORRESPONDENCE

'Fair' isn't 'free'

Montreal, Canada

To the Editors: Thank you for publishing Jordan Bishop's excellent analysis of the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States ["Trading Away the Future," December 16, 1988]. Among his fears for the future is that the U.S. may decide to regard some of the Canadian social programs as forms of government-sponsored subsidies, hence, as unfair competition, and demand that these programs be discontinued. What worries me even more is that after a certain period of time, Canadian corporations will begin to complain that higher taxes in Canada prevent them from competing with American firms and try to convince the government to lower taxes, even though this means reducing support for social programs. I agree with Jordan Bishop that, in the context of the global shift to the economic right, the recent Free Trade Agreement threatens to produce a qualitative difference in Canadian society.

GREGORY BAUM
McGill University

Women in the desert

Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Editors: I had started an answer to John Garvey's November 18 article, "Standing in for Jesus," with a quote from Benedicta Ward's, *The Desert Christian*. Before I could get it typed in final form, his next article arrived [December 16] quoting from the same source, different story. I'd like to answer both articles.

In "Standing in for Jesus," Garvey waffles both intellectually and theologically on the question of woman as priest. One of his coy suggestions is that a woman, should she feel called to priesthood, have a chat with a wise old monk. I'm not sure what Garvey's expectations are (discouragement or laughter probably), but a few years ago, reading Ward's book (p.102), I had such a chat: "Abba Poemen said to Abba Joseph, 'Tell me how to become a monk.' He said, 'If you want to find rest here below, and hereafter, in all circumstances say, Who am I? and do not judge anyone.'"

For me, that ongoing question of identity has more than once given up the answer "priest." An answer, an insight I am bound to be obedient to, as humbly as I can, trying to sort out what it means, perhaps for the rest of my life. How can Garvey so cavalierly claim that the "call" has "nothing to do with divine urging?" If it has anything to do with my essential identity, it has everything to do with God, with the divine, and my participation in God's will.

I went on with that November 18 article, in my culturally bound way as woman, giving Garvey a second chance, that there might be something there for me to reconsider. But at the end, highlighted with its own special box, was Garvey's arrogant, mean, and cruel dismissal of Matthew Fox and his work. I knew I had to protest.

Garvey's most recent piece, "Faithful Conflict" [December 16], set it right up for me. In his concluding paragraph, Garvey chose the story about a pagan priest having something important to say to the desert fathers: "Where we allow our allegiance to a tradition to become a club with which we can bash those who disagree, we have reduced the truth to something we hope to wield and manage to our own satisfaction."

Doesn't Garvey see that he bashed Fox in just this way? How can he tell the story of the pagan priest having something to teach the desert fathers and not accept the possibility that a fellow Christian might have something worth hearing, even though he has a different vision? Or, as Fox uses the dysfunctional family to explain Ratzinger's fury, is it always easier to be kinder to the stranger, the outsider, the "pagan," than to the sibling who is excited and committed to a different piece of experience and hope than the rest of the "good" brothers and sisters who remain in the parental tradition?

Whatever, the wisdom of Abba Joseph—never to stop asking Who am I? and to judge no one—applies to all of us. Matthew Fox is not a heretic. I will always be grateful to him for calling my attention back beyond the cross and suffering to the glory of creation, which is where the Incarnation and Resurrection brought us, but we rarely claim it. I am

(Continued on page 95)

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters should not exceed 250 words and are subject to editing for clarity and space limitations.

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COMMONWEAL

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The editors are always glad to consider any material for publication, but may we again remind readers that unsolicited manuscripts should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. We regret that we cannot otherwise return such material.

Gottwald's cap

History is fragile. Never more so then when its retelling falls into the hands of those who have interests other than telling the story the way it happened. In the opening tale of *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Milan Kundera recalls how a 1948 photo of a triumphant group of Czechoslovak Communists was altered to fit later events: "Clementis was charged with treason and hanged. The propaganda section immediately airbrushed him out of history and, obviously, out of all the photographs as well. Ever since, Gottwald has stood on that balcony alone. Where Clementis once stood, there is only bare palace wall. All that remains of Clementis is the cap on Gottwald's head." (The solicitous Clementis had placed the cap there to fend off the cold.)

The recent film *Mississippi Burning* has something of that airbrushed quality for those who were alive and alert during the momentous and galvanizing events of Mississippi Summer (1964). Those events included the murders of civil rights workers, James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman, and the search for their bodies and their killers. *Mississippi Burning* opens with a scene depicting the murders of three civil rights workers, who may or may not be Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman, but who bear a close resemblance. The crime committed, the movie goes on to tell the tale of two indefatigable FBI agents and their efforts to solve the murders, bring the killers to justice, and, by the way, bring justice and the right to vote to black Mississippians. The director, Alan Parker, has defended his fictionalized account on the grounds that he could have never raised the money to make a movie that told the "real" story. That would have entailed a more prominent role for blacks, a supporting role for white civil rights workers, and possibly a more nuanced treatment of white Mississippians, not all of whom, after all, could have been members of the Ku Klux Klan. The FBI would have been deep in the background, if it had appeared in the movie at all.

Airbrushing history? Lots of moviegoers and reviewers haven't seen it that way, finding a vivid reminder—in the film's depiction of fire bombings, lynchings, beatings—of the fear and oppression that segregation once fostered and created. Nonetheless, we are inclined to see in the film an ominous resemblance to the residual cap on Gottwald's head. "Organized forgetting," as Kundera names the process through which the powerful obliterate the memories of the weaker by erasing their history and language and literature, has its analogy in the relation of whites and blacks in this country. Not only are whites more politically and economically powerful, they are also more culturally powerful; not only do whites run the government, and the banks, and the hospitals, and the schools, they also write the laws, the regulations, and—witness *Mississippi Burning*—the stories. And, if Alan Parker is right, we get the kind of stories whites want to see and hear—the story that

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"good whites" in the FBI outsmarted the "bad whites" in Mississippi while fearful blacks kept their distance from both. Organized forgetting.

Little surprise then that blacks and whites have such contrasting perceptions of how relations between the races are faring almost twenty-five years after Mississippi Summer. In a poll recently conducted for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Lou Harris and Associates found wide differences between whites and blacks on questions covering equal pay for equal work, treatment by the police, the consequences of congressional actions, and the effects of the Reagan administration. By large majorities, whites think blacks are better off in all these respects than blacks think they are.

Or take more esoteric examples. A number of medical journals have recently published reports showing that blacks are less likely than whites, especially white males, to have coronary by-pass surgery or to receive kidney transplants, even when factors such as income, insurance status, age, and other variables are controlled. That means race remains an important factor in how doctors and the health-care systems treat blacks, certainly in high-tech medical care. Ditto the U.S. Navy, which found in a recent self-assessment that while open racial conflict has died down since the 1970s, blacks and Hispanics are still less likely than whites to be recruited, to be promoted, or to receive the kind of technical education that would allow them to advance in the aviation or submarine branches—all of which means they are not rising in the ranks of the navy. And the FBI itself has admitted discrimination toward its own black agents.

These examples as reported are all hedged—not necessarily incorrectly—with a variety of possibly extenuating explanations, all implying that the U.S. of 1989 is not Mississippi in 1964, that it is not segregationist. Agreed. And the analogy to Kundera's work notwithstanding, it is also not Czechoslovakia. But these examples raise once again the all-important question of perception and truth- telling. If whites think blacks are being treated equally, how is it that blacks think they are being discriminated against in subtle and unsubtle ways?

There is an obvious answer: blacks *are* discriminated against *and*, in addition, they continue to suffer the effects of past discrimination in housing, schooling, and jobs. Their day-to-day experience of racial prejudice and racial disdain does not allow them "organized forgetting." The black struggle for equality did not end in 1964 or with the Civil Rights Act—and two FBI agents did not set matters right.

Amend the obvious answer with a complicating footnote. Whites strongly register the successes of the Civil Rights Revolution. Attitudes (including their own) changed. Legal barriers fell, legal protections were put in place, remedial plans were adopted. That consciousness of virtue and progress, some think, excuses exasperation: "We've tried everything," from the welfare liberalism of the Democrats to the trickle-down solutions of the Republicans, and yet there is cause for fear and disappointment in the rampant crime and violence in black neighborhoods, the crack epidemic, the numbers of single mothers, the school dropout rate.

In truth, these are alibis and not excuses. Openness to real history tells us that we have ended *de jure* segregation but the housing ghettos remain, schools are by and large still separate and scandalously unequal, incentives for self-improvement weak, occasions for despair plentiful. True, blacks who use these conditions as reasons to opt out or give up are failing themselves and society. So are whites who think a couple of decades should have been enough to fix things up, who failed to anticipate failure. Both blacks and whites have to keep trying to imagine a different future and searching for roads to get there.

One thing is certain: The future we hoped for isn't here yet; we have not yet reached the time when "race-conscious" affirmative action programs can be abandoned or enfeebled—*pace* Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's majority opinion declaring unconstitutional the Minority Business Utilization Plan of Richmond's city council.

Race is the great fault line in our history. Until it is bridged, we cannot be a just society. Blacks all too painfully remember that history. Justice Thurgood Marshall remembers. In his dissent to the Richmond decision he asks who better than Richmond—the capital of the Confederacy— knows what racial discrimination is and who better than they know how appropriate is their set-aside program for minorities. Joining in dissent, Justice Harry Blackmun writes: "[T]his Court, the supposed bastion of equality, strikes down Richmond's efforts as though discrimination had never existed or was not demonstrated...." Organized forgetting.

GONE WITH THE WIND

Before Former President Reagan (yes, we've been waiting a long time to write that) left Washington for Bel Air, he was crowned King of the Polls. According to those who collect public opinion, no one has come away from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue smelling better.

The secret of Ronald Reagan's success—both as an actor and as a politician—was his ability to play to his audience. He knew how to please: please his directors, his viewers, his voters. And when he did not please, he was hurt. He never forgave the "harsh" critics of his movies or the negative voices raised in the press over his political decisions. And when he did not please the voters—which, to our mind, happened entirely too infrequently—he found it difficult to regain his bearings. Recall his bewilderment after the Iran-*contra* revelations when his popularity took such a beating. He admitted that it was his darkest hour in the White House.

His darkest hour; but unfortunately not because he realized he had been derelict in his duties, had committed significant failures in judgment, or had neglected his constitutional pledge to uphold the law of the land. No, it was Ronald Reagan's darkest hour simply because the American people had come to question his veracity and the unreserved trust they had placed

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in him. For Ronald Reagan, approval was the bottom line.

Reagan's fortunes reversed with the INF Treaty. But having won the battle, he has not finally won the war. For after eight years as president, Ronald Reagan is no closer to answering his most famous dramatic line ("Where's the rest of me?" *King's Row*) than he was when he took office.

If proof of Ronald Reagan's lack of self-comprehension is wanted, we need go no further than his farewell address. He ought to be remembered for it. Who else could have offered so much self-praise, so many half-truths, and so much sentimentality so effectively? "They call it the Reagan revolution," he brimmed. "We meant to change a nation, and instead, we changed a world." "We've done our part." "All in all, not bad. Not bad at all."

No warnings here. No mention of crises that face the republic. Nothing about racism. Nothing about the global environment. Nothing about national addictiveness, nuclear mismanagement, homelessness, the financial IOU's we are leaving to our children. And certainly nothing about corruption in government or the growing gap between rich and poor.

In a remarkable collection of what Oliver Sacks calls "clinical tales" (*The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, Summit, 1985), the neurophysiologist draws special attention to the perceptual gifts of certain individuals society generally considers as neurologically impaired. In "The President's Speech," Sacks reports that he happened to walk into an aphasia ward one evening just as the president began an address over national television. This is what he observed: "There he was, the old Charmer, the Actor, with his practiced rhetoric, his histrionisms, his emotional appeal—and all the patients were convulsed with laughter....The president was, as always, moving—but he was moving them, apparently, mainly to laughter. What could they be thinking?"

Sacks then discusses the ability of aphasiacs to understand the "tone-color" of language—that quality of speech which communicates the inner meaning of words rather than just the assemblage of words themselves—and to know unerringly the verisimilitude of a speaker's voice. "Thus it was the grimaces, the histrionisms, the false gestures and, above all, the false tones and cadences of the voice which rang false for these immensely sensitive patients....That is why they laughed at the president's speech." While we normals were fooled, "only the brain-damaged remained intact, undeceived."

There are some people—and we count ourselves among them—who will not shed a tear over Bel Air's recent gain. We will not miss the lies of the Reagan presidency (the purposeful disinformation campaigns, the misspeaks, calling the *contras* the equivalent of our founding fathers and the homeless the beneficiaries of their own choice); the thinly concealed meanness (Governor Dukakis's "mental problems"); the flouting of international law (walking out of the World Court after mining Nicaragua's harbors); the UN bashing; the praise for those who lied to Congress and destroyed government documents (Poindexter and North); the moral lassitude of dealing with Edwin Meese; or the sheer sentimentality ("Just once more [again!] for the Gipper"). What is needed after eight years of Ronald Reagan and the Reagan inversion is not a gentle breeze, but a fierce and cleansing wind.

DOES GOD CONDEMN CONTRACEPTION?

A QUESTION FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH

BERNARD HÄRING

The following essay appeared in the biweekly Italian Catholic magazine, *Il Regno* (January 15, 1989). It is a protest against the inflexible position the Vatican is taking on the question of artificial contraception and against anonymous denunciations of theologians and other inquisitorial methods—techniques deployed early in this century by the Vatican curia under the guidance of Monsignor Umberto Benigni to discredit the so-called "modernists" (see John Coleman, "Who Are the Catholic 'Fundamentalists'?" *Commonweal*, January 27, 1989).

The author of the essay, the Reverend Bernard Häring, C.SS.R., is a retired professor of Rome's Alphonsianum Academy and the distinguished author of numerous books on moral theology. He was a member of the Papal Birth Control Commission (see *Commonweal*, September 6, 1968). The event that occasioned his protest was an international meeting of moral theologians, "Humanae vitae: 20 Years After," which took place November 9-12, 1988, in Rome. It was organized by the John Paul II Institute at the Lateran University (Monsignor Carlo Caffarra, president) together with the Roman Academic Center Santa Croce (Opus Dei). The meeting was financed by the Knights of Columbus. (Monsignor Caffarra is also a consultant for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith and the Pontifical Council on the Family, and

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a member of the International Theological Commission.) According to news reports, Monsignor Caffarra, a moral theologian, has compared contraception to committing "homicide in the heart." At the November meeting the pope said that the teaching against contraception is not a man-made doctrine, but that it was "written by the creative hand of God in the nature of the human person" and confirmed by God's hand. It is these views that Häring refers to as having caused an earthquake in the church. After describing a contrary position held by other theologians including himself, Häring concludes by calling for a new worldwide consultation on the question of birth control. The text has been translated with the assistance of the Reverends Anthony DiRusso and Paul Dinter, and is reprinted with the permission of the author.

THE EDITORS

The earthquake in the Caucasus is a striking image for a similar earthquake provoked in the church by a certain monsignor. Attempts to smooth over the dimensions of the tragedy may only make the situation worse. The well-known weekly, *Christ in der Gegenwart* (December 18, 1988), usually very restrained in its style, writes apropos of the current situation in the church:

> The problem touches the church in its entirety. This is all the more true when a person's central preoccupation concerns not simply individual piety but rather the capacity to believe in communion with the whole church in which the bishop of Rome has a decisive role. Pope John Paul II is devout, just as St. Pius X was. However, the idea that he could proceed nowadays in the same way against a possible modernism, as Pius X did in his day by having Monsignor Benigni collect anonymous denunciations, wounds us to the heart.

One of these "Benignis," teamed up with his allies to collect these denunciations, is Monsignor Carlo Caffarra, who has emerged unexpectedly on the stage of world opinion. He has made his position well known. What hurts the most is not so much his intolerant and surprisingly simplistic theology, as the way he puts himself forward as the front line of defense in the fight for orthodoxy and adherence to the papacy. He has always been indiscreet—as is well known in Rome—and, in various ways, has made known his own influence on the reigning pontiff. However, the congress of moral theologians which he organized, his own intervention at the meeting, the pope's discourse that followed it—with the highest recommendations for Caffarra, and the final press conference have definitively brought the stakes of the game into the open.

The reaction has been striking. The earthquake creates even more dangerous landslides. It is sufficient to read the numerous letters to the editor in religious journals from priests and lay people. Confidence is shaken. A process of polarization unknown up to now is becoming apparent and has already taken the shape of a psychological schism. People no longer answer the intransigents' hymn of victory with valid arguments, even though that is still possible, but rather with anger, irony, and sarcasm.

For some weeks, I have forced myself to quiet the swells of emotion with moderating statements, especially in front of religion teachers and priests with pastoral responsibilities. They reply courteously but firmly, "In our situation, this doesn't give us any help at all. What should we do to stop the silent and sometimes explicit abandonment of the church and to heal an anti-Roman feeling that is growing virtually intractable?"

In fact, we must do something even if we pay a price. First, we need the courage to make a brutally honest diagnosis. But we also have to foster boundless confidence in God. At the same time, we must unceasingly try to recreate the spirit of mutual confidence that is now threatened.

Two fundamentally different ways of thinking are at issue. Different consequences follow from them. The polarization is such that, after the November congress of moralists, it is very difficult to put together a mutually respectful dialogue. What is most painful in the present situation is that the most unyielding advocates of the most uncompromising position consider themselves alone to be trustworthy. I myself have seen a list of such "trustworthies" that circulates in the Vatican. Do they have the nerve to consider themselves the only safe recipients of the pope's confidence?

We must find a way out of this blind alley. Let me express a wish and formulate a proposal.

Wish: When the prophet Jonah was fleeing his responsibility and the ship on which he had embarked was ready to sink, he offered to abandon it. Obviously, I do not ask that Monsignor Caffarra throw himself into the sea during the storm. But couldn't all these descendants of Monsignor Benigni show more discretion and intervene less frequently as "prophets of doom" with the pilot of the bark of Peter? We are dealing with our common destiny. If they would pause a moment in silence, perhaps the Lord could give them the efficacious grace to doubt their own "tutiorism." [The term "tutiorism" refers to one of the traditional moral systems. Its fixed rule was that the safer position was always obligatory and the literal application of the law must prevail over every doubt.]

Proposal: I hope our beloved pontiff understands that we are dealing with a conflict of epic proportions, no less than the one at Antioch between Peter and Paul. The debate must be conducted openly on the basis of a dialogue without violence, and with mutual love. The two positions need to be set forth briefly and substantially. The bishops should be consulted individually as well as every Catholic faculty of theology, asking them to take a position on the two theses. This would have to be done in a way that takes account of the current mutual lack of trust. The inquiry would also have to consider the common opinion of the churches separated from Rome, especially the Orthodox church, and their way of conceiving the economy of salvation.

The first position has been clearly expressed by Monsignor Caffarra. John Paul II's talk to the moralists seems to me very close to Monsignor Caffarra's. According to this position, artificial methods of contraception constitute in every human and cultural circumstance, without exception, a grave moral

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fault. This tenet expresses a law written clearly by God in everyone's moral consciousness and is confirmed by divine revelation. Whoever doubts it, even in extremely difficult circumstances, sets himself against God and his holiness, wants to be like God, and renders meaningless the teaching of the magisterium and of conscience. That obviously holds even for spouses who use artificial means of contraception to preserve their marriages and to prevent the estrangement of their partners from the church.

The position so violently attacked by Caffarra and his friends can be briefly described in the following way:

1. Basically, the question is not just one of a method of controlling births, but rather has to do with the authentically responsible and nobly courageous transmission of life. Married people make this decision before God and after a patient dialogue, above all about transmitting life in an atmosphere of faithful conjugal love that is intimately affectionate. If this basic decision is morally corrupted because of serious selfishness and the erroneous refusal to have children, it cannot be corrected solely by using natural methods.

2. As far as the method of controlling births is concerned, the elementary and common rules of medical ethics are relevant. One does not use medicine or undergo a serious operation when health can be fostered better by a reasonable diet and by a healthy lifestyle. What follows for our question is that one would not have recourse to artificial methods if the goal of responsible parenthood and faithful conjugal love could be attained by natural family planning. Only in the cases where this cannot be achieved would it be reasonable to have recourse to *epikeia* [an exception justified by special or unforeseen circumstances], applying by analogy normal medical morality. Medical and surgical means are taken into consideration if they are necessary to save life and/or reestablish a state of health. Nevertheless, recourse to artificial methods for responsible family planning represents a more serious problem than taking a pill for a headache.

3. In all cases where both spouses maintain they cannot take the responsibility of another pregnancy and they must choose a contraceptive method, we must seriously consider the following: Will that method foster the marriage in its broadest sense? Does it favor that love and harmony which are so basic to mutual fidelity and so necessary for raising children? There is no question here of abortion.

Concretely, I propose the following: in order to reestablish in the church that indispensable bond of trust, the pope should establish a special commission, whose members would be beyond any suspicion. He should entrust to it an inquiry to be conducted among all the bishops, all the theological faculties, and the most important associations of lay people, asking, after mature reflection before God, which of these they consider the better model, or even whether they are undecided.

A further question [for the commission] might be the following: In its opinion, is it enough for the pope to express once again his own conviction, while inviting the interested parties not to accuse each other of heresy, but instead to carry on the dialogue? The question whether, and to what extent, the doctrine currently espoused by the pope should be considered as revealed by God can no longed be avoided. To reestablish an atmosphere of mutual confidence and trust as effectively and as quickly as possible, the Vatican would have to declare unequivocally from the beginning of such a world consultation that for its duration we must abstain from any type of mutual accusation of heresy and expressions of preconceived hostility. It should strictly prohibit all collecting of anonymous denunciations. The commitment not to tolerate any more anonymous denunciations or special inquiries on this matter should also be reflected in how the lists of candidates for episcopal appointments are drawn up.

An inquiry of the type proposed, conducted on a world level, would be expensive both financially and operationally, although less burdensome than the necessary relief efforts after the earthquake in the Caucasus. Nonetheless, it seems to me that such a course is unavoidable in order to clarify these two positions and to achieve a new and deeper climate of mutual trust in the church.

At the conclusion of the inquiry, the results would have to be published in full detail. Such an objective is well worth the effort and the expense. The issue at stake is twofold: to try to prevent the numbers of those leaving the church from reaching catastrophic proportions, and to establish instead a climate of credibility without which a new evangelization carried on with common accord is unthinkable.

I can already hear possible objections. An inquiry of such a nature and such dimensions is in open conflict with a proper understanding of the "hierarchy of truths," the now classic notion that different truths of the faith vary in their centrality. It is indeed true that, whatever one's opinion on the matter, the problem of prohibiting artificial means of contraception does not occupy a preeminent position in the "hierarchy of truths." But my answer is the following: some people, for example Monsignor Caffarra, have raised the issue to such importance that the conflict is unavoidable. Besides, there is no doubt that John Paul II gives this problem a clear priority. Finally, it is urgent that we do something to prevent further disastrous consequences.

If we want to keep the earthquake that shook the ground of moral theology from producing further tremors, probably of even greater violence, it is necessary to take a position against the following affirmation of Monsignor Caffarra: "Here is why man, having been raised to the ethical level, is no longer interested, minimally or ultimately, in the possibilities, the consequences, the historical results of his activity. He is elevated above all of this calculation."

Obviously, the problem facing us is more than mere "calculation." We are trying to assess accurately the consequences that may well flow from this problem, and to do so in the light of the commandment of love, understood in the wide sense, and of the mission of the church to proclaim the joyful news to all people. We are dealing with a question of maintaining a responsible and deliberate Christian ethics that will allow the church to be a prophetic, believable voice in the effort toward peace, justice, and the safeguarding of creation. □

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OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

NO SAFE PLACE

THE DRUG WAR COMES HOME

To me there has always been something solid and comforting about the names of country places. For the most part, our ancestors in this country weren't given to the fanciful. They settled for the downright and the obvious. From east to west, for example, they named streets for what they were—Main Street, School Street, Church Street, River Street. When it came to towns and identifiable sections of the countryside they often chose names of factual description. I thought of this when two place names familiar to me from childhood appeared in the news recently—Plainview and Sand Prairie.

Plainview was the market town—the "Saturday night town"—of my childhood vacations on the farm. It was the place where my aunt's farm neighbors shopped for clothes and staples, went to church, and sold their grain and livestock. There was a small business district, some tree-shaded streets of residences, a school, and a few churches. And a *plain view* over the rolling countryside. On Saturday nights the broad main street was crowded with people in from the country to buy what they needed, and to visit with each other and catch up on the local news. Although I looked forward to those summer Saturdays, Plainview seemed to me then a poky place with no prospect of excitement.

Sand Prairie was just what the name implies—a sandy prairie on the backwaters of the Mississippi south of my home town. The thin soil was good enough for the scattered, diversified farms with their stands of cottonwood and willow, small orchards, fields where the farmers grew corn, oats, and melons, and pastures where small herds of dairy cows grazed. There were a few hunters' cottages built near the river. It was pleasant and quiet. I remember wandering the two-track roads looking for watermelons and muskmelons in the fall, and hiking through patches of frozen cornstalks in the winter.

Lately the thought of retreating from our big cities occurs more and more often to people like me who aren't held there by occupation. We are increasingly made aware that we live in war zones. On January 1, for example, Isaac Fulwood, Jr., deputy chief of police of Washington, D.C.—my city and, as the nation's capital, everyone's city—issued a desperate plea to us all. He told us that he and his detectives and officers could no longer cope without help. "I see my officers suffering because they are fighting a war and losing. This has got to stop" (*Washington Post*, January 1, 1989).

Chief Fulwood says that in the past year, with the murder of 372 of its young people, our city has sent a message to the world that here a human life has no value. That means, he asserts, "that your life and mine has no value."

It is not just the volume of the murders but their viciousness that appalls him. They are drug-related and are paid for. Detectives find people shot with high-powered weapons, their bodies shattered. There is a growing element in the community, he says, whose callousness is hard to imagine. "They can go out, kill someone, then go home, go to bed, and go to sleep." But his homicide detectives can't sleep after what they have seen, and his police officers are overwhelmed.

What Chief Fulwood pleads for us to do is to make a personal commitment to stopping this war, to take the attitude that "it all starts with me. If I do all I can, then things will change." The problem presented this way seems more frightening than ever. If the police experience burnout and despair, can I or my friends really do anything to help? The lure of retreat has never been so strong. Why not leave this terrible problem behind and go to a Plainview or a Sand Prairie?

Why not? Ironically, because retreat is rapidly being cut off. There were news reports last month that the county's biggest drug bust in history had been made in Sand Prairie, where two young men were caught with a stash of cocaine and a hoard of cash. Last year, too, cocaine was discovered in Plainview—shipped in by United Parcel Service! In 1988 there were 160 drug arrests in the nearby rural counties. "Cocaine has come to the corn fields," Sheriff Gudmundson of Fillmore County told the *Chicago Tribune*. If cocaine has come, crack (purified cocaine) is not far behind. And with crack comes violence. There is, I am forced to realize, no safe place. It is best to stay and do what I can to answer Chief Fulwood's appeal. We are all in this together. □

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PRAYER

WHEN? HOW? WHY?

MEINRAD CRAIGHEAD
DANIEL MULHOLLAN
BARBARA GRIZZUTI HARRISON
MARIAN BURKHART
FRANK MACCHIAROLA
RUTH M. AMES

As we begin the observance of Lent this year, we are reminded not only of the historical events generally recalled at this season—Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection—but of his practical instruction to always be on watch and to pray constantly. But the question quickly arises, how do we accomplish that? And besides, what precisely is prayer? Is it worth the effort?

To answer some of these questions, or at least to get some feeling for them, we asked a theologian, John H. Wright, practically experienced in this discipline to reflect briefly on the nature of prayer—what it is, and what we are doing when we pray. And we asked six lay people to share with us how they pray concretely in the course of their busy lives. The variety and vitality of their responses, kept to a minimum at our request, proved to be both instructive and enriching. THE EDITORS

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BARBARA GRIZZUTI HARRISON, *author and essayist whose books include* Visions of Glory *and* Off-Center, *is at work on a new book,* Italian Days *(Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Spring, 1989).*
MARIAN BURKHART *has taught English in and out of New York, is a book reviewer, and also writes an occasional literary essay.*
FRANK MACCHIAROLA *is a professor of business at Columbia University. He is a former president of the Academy of Political Science, chancellor of the New York City school system, and president of New York City Partnership, an organization of business, education, and community leaders.*
RUTH M. AMES *is a writer and teacher whose book,* God's Plenty, *was published by Loyola University Press.*

Meinrad Craighead

When the sun rises over the Sandia Mountains, a fire burns facing it. My morning prayer begins with fire burning in a terra cotta vessel that sits on an altar. I built the altar in the center of my land here, near the Rio Grande, as an act of thanksgiving for my fiftieth birthday several years ago. My prayer moves around the fire, around the four sides of the altar, honoring the cross of the four directions (our universal landscape), the seasons, and the elements. When I approach the altar in the dark before dawn, before I lay the cottonwood kindling and light the fire, I take ashes from yesterday's fire and rub them on my head (if every day is Resurrection, every day is Ash Wednesday). By the time I have made the sacred prayer circle the fire has burned to embers. I have spoken with the living and the dead, ancestors, godmothers and godfathers, animals and the elements, and last night's dream. I end my prayer with water.

Each morning I baptize myself and say my name (which means "great counselor") and speak to myself saying something like this, "Meinrad, you belong to God. You drink her milk. She looks at you. You look at her. Because she looks at you, you paint." I throw the remaining water into the fire to hear the sound of the union and watch steam fill the belly of the vessel. Before long, in this high desert climate, the ash is gray dry, the bed for tomorrow's fire. When I leave the altar I go into my studio and begin another day of painting. My studio is named for and dedicated to Maat: "the all-seeing Eye of the Mother." I paint within her eye and she watches me.

Daniel Mulhollan

Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me. There it is—quite simple really. Just say this prayer constantly and your prayer life is set. Well, let me tell you, it is easier said than done. Many is the day I have started off determined to say this little prayer continually through my waking hours. But it is not a habit yet: other habits or events intervene, such as not being able to find the deodorant or discovering that the car windows need scraping. Pretty soon I find that I am functioning, at least sort of, without saying the prayer at all. I usually become aware that I am not repeating the prayer when I confront a situation when I begin saying it again—when a car cuts in front and scares the hell out of me, as it were, or I am waiting for an elevator and begin to grind my teeth. It is at great spiritual moments like these I am reminded to pray. "Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen..." (Luke 21:36).

Now I don't wish to leave you with the impression that I am

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in a rut. Sometimes the variant—Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner—comes to mind, usually when I have an eternity to wait in the grocery line and find the person ahead of me has seventeen items and thus exceeds the fifteen-item limit. (Yes, when I was counting I was not saying the Jesus Prayer.) Sometimes "Hail Mary, full of grace" comes along for periods of time and is the most comforting. But I am afraid that it will be a very long time before I can say that I went through even one day constantly praying.

But I keep trying, I'm not quite sure why, although I certainly could point to the scriptural exhortations to pray continually. There appears to be something very helpful in placing oneself in a poise of always seeking mercy, to be constantly reminded that out there is one beyond my limits who is without limits. The Jesus Prayer certainly helps to remind me that anxiety is attempting to will that which cannot be willed, especially when I have a carload of kids and beach gear, and the storm clouds appear on the horizon as I park.

Marian Burkhart

At praying I am inept. Thus, I begin with ritual—night prayers, grace before meals, the Mass—because even if I am so weary or so distracted that the rite is reduced to rote, I am, nonetheless, acknowledging both my creatureliness and my relationship to all those others in the church militant who say or have said prayers, too. One of these prayers means so much to me that it has become with me almost a mantra: "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof. Speak but the word, and my soul shall be healed." Of course, prayer does not stop at ritual. I do freely associate, thank God occasionally, collect into my prayers those who have informed my life, and plead for what those dear to me, including myself, need. Nor do I hesitate to take God to task when life seems not worth the bearing, when my soul seems singularly unhealed, for at such times I have no heart or mind to lift to God, except a heart and mind frustrated, enraged, and in pain.

Then there is the prayer at the Offertory of the Mass which completes my "mantra,": when we bless God "through whose goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made," for it compels me to focus on my own role in my salvation. If I cannot be saved but through the grace of God, that grace can act only through me and that place I am to fill in his eternal plan would without me be forever empty. I am enabled, then, to flesh out my feeble praying by offering him what I do well—reading, thinking, conversing, cooking—even bed-making, if we are really considering the quotidian. There have been moments of prayer when God and I have worked in tandem, the partnership an effective act, and I have known, for a while at least, that God holds my hand.

Barbara Grizzuti Harrison

If I were to follow a formula for prayer (which I do not), I'd find one in the acronym submitted by Evelyn Waugh to Nancy Mitford (whose work, piercing and gay, full of the joy of the mystery that permeates daily life, is a kind of prayer...if you ask me): ACTS—Adoration, Contrition, Thanks, and Supplication, in that order.

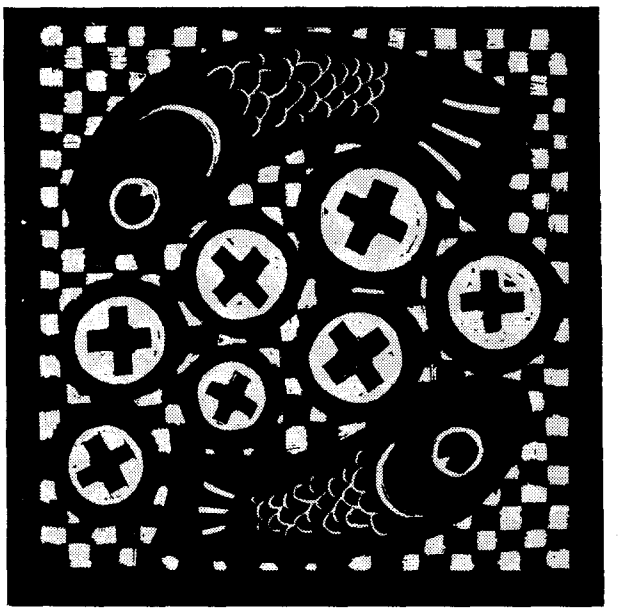
I should like very much to meet Evelyn Waugh and Nancy Mitford (who said that Waugh's description of the resurrection of the dead put her in mind of a bunch of guests madly scrambling for their coats at the end of a long and probably drunken party) in heaven.

I do not like to burden God with gratuitous information. For example, I am sure he knows I'd like to meet Evelyn Waugh and Nancy Mitford in heaven, so I don't tell him that. One of the things that makes God God is that he knows everything (before I know myself, he knows me); so when I have wishes in regard to other people, I just say their names. I let him fill in the rest. I don't think he requires résumés or detailed specifications. In any case, he seldom arranges people or events in a way that is consistent with my wishes—though all may be (how would I know?) in keeping with my needs. I just keep on saying the names of people I love.

Believing in their goodness, I pray for the happiness of my children; I also pray, as all mothers do, to bear their pain, but, on the evidence, God wants them to bear their own pain, more's the pity.

When I look at a painting I love (that of St. Paul by Caravaggio, for example); or a building I love (Brunelleschi's Santo Spirito, for example); or a cityscape that hammers at and

(Continued on page 77)



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WHEN WE PRAY

JOHN H. WRIGHT

When language about God becomes address, when we say "you" and not just "he" or "she," we are praying. Prayer is dealing with God in a person-to-person manner, entering into some kind of communion with God. This is the heart of the matter, whatever form prayer may take (praise, thanksgiving, petition, etc.) and whatever method we may employ (vocal, mental, discursive, affective, etc.).

Three problems, however, surround personally addressing God, problems found in every age but possessing a special difficulty and insistence in our own. How we deal with these problems reflects not only our view of prayer but, more profoundly, our understanding of and our attitude toward God.

The first problem concerns the very nature of prayer. What is the point of addressing God? Do we think that he hears us and responds, or is our address a kind of metaphorical gesture, like an ode to autumn? Do we mean to inform, to persuade, to encourage, to influence in our favor? This problem gets special significance from contemporary language analysis.

The second problem concerns God's activity in the world. If God somehow replies to us, how does this happen? The universe is a vast network of material beings interacting with one another in definite ways. Where does God fit in? It is the view of some scientists and others today that there is no room left in the universe for the work of a divine agent.

Finally, the third problem asks what comes about as a result of prayer. Does God really respond to prayer and grant requests? The contemporary pragmatic spirit, which values so highly the fruits of technology, makes this an especially urgent problem for us.

These, then are the special questions treated here: What am I doing when I pray (the language problem)? What is God doing when I pray (the science problem)? Does God really answer prayer (the pragmatic problem)? It would take many pages to answer these questions in depth; I can only sketch an outline of answers in this article.

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WHAT AM I DOING WHEN I PRAY? In trying to determine what prayer itself is, we may note that praying to God has many surface similarities to asking another human being for help. We come to the other with our need and seek assistance. We do the same with God. But the petition we make to another person usually has two aspects about it that make no sense when we are praying to God. Very often we are letting the other know about our need, and we may also feel it necessary to offer reasons for granting what we need. But God knows our needs before we ask, and if God is unwilling for some reasons to do what we ask, it is absurd to think that we can persuade him to do otherwise.

But beneath the superficial similarities and the significant differences, there is a profounder similarity that these observations do not even touch. Asking another human being and asking God are both effective symbolic activities. Both are bringing to expression, usually in word and gesture, something of the personal relationship that exists between us, and thereby strengthening and deepening it. When I pray, I am expressing not only my need, but a relationship that includes my conviction that the other is able to help me, and is sufficiently concerned about me to consider doing what I have asked. From this perspective, informing/persuading is not the issue at all, but rather establishing/deepening a personal relationship is the issue.

Why do parents teach their children to say "please"? It is not that saying "please" conveys information or reasons, but it helps to create and deepen respect and confidence, and establishes the relationships that bind a family together in a truly human and caring way. Saying "please" helps maintain a situation in which love is expressed by asking and giving.

Of course, sometimes the personal element is minimal. A street person asking for change is not looking for a long-term commitment. But even this request and the way in which it is answered do something to establish a certain kind of society.

Between friends and between us and God, asking for help is first of all an expression of a personal relationship, a relationship that consequently grows and becomes more alive. Prayer is neither informing nor persuading, much less is it a kind of magical spell compelling the divinity to satisfy my needs. But prayer always expresses symbolically a personal relationship through trust, confidence, praise, appreciation, or repentance. As in the case of human relations, the expression itself strengthens what it symbolizes.

Everything, of course, depends on what is truly being expressed, not just what the words seem to say. If our apparently fervent prayer really expresses selfish ambition, our relationship with God is not thereby deepened, though our selfishness will be. If, like the Pharisee in the

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temple, we thank God for how superior we are to other people (cf. Luke 18:11), it is our pride that grows, not our gratitude. But if we ask to succeed in order to serve God and others more fruitfully, then our love of God and others grows, whatever our outward success. It is what really comes to expression that is thereby intensified.

WHAT IS GOD DOING WHEN I PRAY? The second problem concerns the divine action itself. How and where is God active in the world? It is not possible to conceive the divine causality as another force alongside material forces like gravity and magnetism that we can observe and measure. Thomas Aquinas proposed a response to this question by saying that God is in all things most intimately as the source of their very being. As the ultimate cause and source of being God supports the whole order of created causes in their relations to one another and to the effects they produce. Without in any way interfering with the activities of these causes on the finite level, God directs and influences them from within so that they form not just isolated and random causes, but one universe, the unity we have in mind when we say "Nature" as including everything.

We see an analogy for this action of God within all things in the way the human mind and will operate within the human body. The will influences the motions of the body most manifestly in deliberate acts like walking and speaking. The human spirit can also very subtly influence the whole way the body operates: Optimism, hope, and cheerfulness can promote healing, while despondency and discouragement can inhibit it. The human spirit is not here interfering with the laws of chemistry or biology, but it is influencing from within the way in which they work.

God has created the natures of all things and from within preserves them and draws them into unity and into the future. These natures do not constitute an utterly deterministic world, as the mechanism of the nineteenth century assumed, but a world open to contingency and development, with only statistical regularity. Within the limits of this regularity which God has established, God can influence the way things act without depriving them of their own natural ways of acting.

Thus, God can indeed respond to prayer by acting within the natures of all things to bring about a particular result, without thereby interfering with these natures. The objection of some scientists comes from considering only forces that act upon "the without" of things, not in "their within," as the human will acts within the human body, not interfering with physical causality, but directing it in particular ways.

DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER? The final question, and in some ways the most pressing, is whether God really answers prayer. Though our pragmatism may urge this question upon us today, the roots of the problem are far older than pragmatism: Human experience shows that our most sincere and insistent prayers often go unanswered. Yet, the Scriptures tell us that divine wisdom reaches from end to end mightily and governs all things gently (cf. Wisd. 8:1). Within this all-encompassing divine wisdom, where every detail is planned, what room is there for a divine action that is prompted by creaturely prayer? Are we to suppose that the initiative for what is to take place in the world has somehow passed from God to us?

In light of the experiential problem, let us advert to what was said earlier about the real nature of prayer. It is not a way of informing or persuading, but of seeking to deepen a personal relationship with God. It is this before it is a request for any particular thing. We ask for particular benefits only within the context of personal relations. The New Testament describes effective prayer as asking according to the will of God (cf. 1 John 5:14-15), and asking in Jesus' name (cf. John 14: 13-14; 15:16). We are told that if we pray in this way we shall surely receive what we ask.

It is possible to miss the real meaning of these expressions. One might think that asking according to the will of God means asking for what God is willing to give. If you do this, you will get it. And asking in Jesus' name might mean asking for what Jesus asks for. This, too, would obviously be effective, but it doesn't help us to know how to pray effectively.

Exploring carefully what these expressions mean yields a deeper understanding of effective prayer. "The will of God" should be understood as the love God has for us; out of this love God wills what is truly for our best interests, all things considered. This always refers to what promotes our participation in God's life, our union now and in eternity. This is what God wills for us before all else. A prayer that asks for something which is according to this will of God is infallibly effective.

Praying in the name of Jesus means praying as a member of his body, as one led by the Spirit, as sharing Jesus' life and his relationship with the Father. In this way we bear Jesus' name and are one with him by the grace of adoption. When our prayer springs from this identity with him, it is a prayer that is answered.

To the objection that prayer is an unwarranted attempt to interfere with the plan of God, which has already arranged everything, we need to reply that the plan of God is not a blueprint for all that is to happen. The plan of God is designed precisely for free creatures called to love and to work out their destinies in complete reliance upon his grace. It is a plan which opens up possibilities for us and encourages us to choose life and not death (cf. Deut. 30:19). It is a plan in which the whole initiative is God's, an initiative of love and grace. This initiative calls for a

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free response of faith and love from us, though it is possible for us to respond with refusal and selfishness. Finally, God responds to our response to his initiative, working through our response what his loving initiative intends as far as we allow.

We see God's plan, then, as involving three stages: an antecedent plan, in which God opens up possibilities and invites us to growth; the human response to this invitation, by which we accept some of these possibilities and decline others; and the consequent plan of God, in which God passes judgment on the human response, working whatever portion of his gracious antecedent plan our response has made possible.

These stages, despite the terms I have used here, do not follow one another chronologically, but are always present and operative together. The absolute initiative of the antecedent plan establishes the context of grace in which all human life and history unfold, and it guarantees the ultimate achievement of God's loving purpose. The human response within this context determines particular events in history and the shape of the divinely guaranteed outcome. The divine response of the consequent plan makes real what is actually happening, the *de facto* realization of God's purposes as we are willing to receive them.

In this view, our prayers are free responses to God's antecedent plan, accepting the possibilities for growth in personal union that it contains and asking for what we think will aid that growth. God answers our prayers by responding to our free responses to his initiative. In this way, God always answers our prayers, always grants what we ask according to his will and in the name of Jesus. □

(Continued from page 74)

enlarges my heart; or the familiar world transformed by snow; and, in particular, when, sheathed in shining water, buoyed, weightless, amazed, relaxed, I swim, waves of joy spread all over me and find expression in multiple silent *thank yous*, which I hope God interprets as prayer, for that is surely what they are. (Sometimes I fall asleep floating.) I am a baby-swimmer, but I can do two rather extraordinary things with ease—I can sit in deep water without treading water (I can read a book in this fashion), and I can stand perpendicularly in deep water; this makes me immensely happy (it also means that I'm unlikely to drown), and I forget myself. Sometimes I think that just not thinking of oneself is a form of prayer, because one's thoughts fly upward.

I do not use prayer as a form of meditation. Perhaps I should. I say the Hail Mary only when I am overwhelmed with physical panic; it is soporific. On the other hand, I do make the sign of the cross a lot (shut up, make the cross, and go to sleep, my Calabrian grandmother used to say to me when I got above myself), for example, when I hear the siren of an ambulance, or when something terrible is on the television news. This is a form of superstition, and of nostalgia, and of faith, too.

Many years ago, I was full of hatred for a man who had had the effrontery to die—a man I'd lived with—and, not knowing that I believed in God, I asked God, as a last desperate measure, to take the corrosive, corrupting hatred away. He did, in the blink of an eye, enabling me to live. That made me his for life. (But I have never again gotten the whole candy store at once.)

Frank Macchiarola

Prayer is communication, and I usually think of it as asking for God's help in dealing with a problem or situation. I'm often involved in some activity, and prayer that asks for help is a natural part of the process of thinking the activity or situation through. (Dear God, what do I do now?) Since action and prayer most often go together for me, I have learned to pray in many different ways, alone or with others. My favorite person to pray to is the Holy Spirit. I also like to think of deceased friends of mine (especially former professors and colleagues—Frank Kilcoyne is a favorite) who did the kind of work I now do and who did it with quality and style.

Over time I have also begun to think that more often than not I am involved in a different form of prayer, one with a much more intense kind of communication. It is not the thinking kind of prayer I just described. It is a feeling kind of prayer and involves a greater, more comprehensive sense of God's presence. The things I do have become a part of prayer, and I think that I do many of these things better as a result. The way I relate to others, approach learning, accept responsibility, and take on a challenge are all extensions of prayer. I have worked hard to

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understand myself, and to do things with a sense of my personal strengths. In that process prayer is both a guide and a comfort.

Ruth M. Ames

Burbling with sympathy for a suicidal friend, I suggested tentatively that she repeat any childhood prayer she could remember. "It calms the heart," I said apologetically.

"It slows the adrenalin," was the way the world's greatest pitcher, Orel Hershiser, put it, explaining his singing of hymns to himself between innings.

Whatever the ball game, my personal prayers turn out equally untheological. When I pray for favors, I don't exactly envisage a Ptolemaic universe with saint-studded stars, but I don't exactly not, either. My God is not an old man with a long beard, but he/she has to be more than First Mover or Designer Quasar for me to pray to him/her.

The More is Jesus. And *pace* science and theology, in the course of the day I address him and his saints in one-liners. "Blessed Mother, help little Julie." "Lord, give me the grace to know your will and to do it." "Lord Jesus, be the center of my life."

My only long prayer is the Mass. The Scripture readings prove especially meaningful when I've studied them at home beforehand. An earnest lector, I sometimes get carried away myself, not, I hope, by my own hamming but by the encounter with the Word. Sometimes, as a quite unearned gift, the Eucharist offers a brief brush with another reality.

In the Mass, I dip into the spiritual treasury of the centuries. In private, I pray like an old child, heavy with years and experiences, light of head and heart. □

A VERY PARTIAL RECLAMATION PROJECT

THE CASE OF COMRADE ORWELL

JOHN RODDEN

Last May 13 the *Literary Gazette*, the organ of the Soviet Writers' Union, published a full-page extract from the most influential political novel of the twentieth century, George Orwell's *1984*. Beneath the excerpt was a stunning drawing of a jackboot stamping on Winston Smith's upturned face.

From a Western standpoint, the appearance of the *1984* extract and the announcement of a complete edition of the novel by mid-1989 are, of course, most welcome. Equally encouraging was the publication in late September of several chapters of Orwell's *Animal Farm* in three different Soviet organs, among them *Nedelya*, the literary supplement to the official government newspaper, *Izvestia*.

These publication events are only two of the many cultural initiatives in the phenomenal reform campaign undertaken by Mikhail Gorbachev. And yet, given that Orwell's two satires have sold more than 40 million copies in sixty-five languages (more than any other pair of books by a single author in history) and his status as the keenest Western critic of the Soviet system under Stalin, their publication possesses much wider significance. The appearance of *Animal Farm* and *1984* represents a new epoch for the Soviet Union as well as for Orwell's reputation in the Communist world. But the disingenuous treatment given the books by the Soviet press also suggests how far *glasnost* has yet to go before it truly signifies "openness."

The *Literary Gazette* drawing could well have portrayed the history of Orwell's reception in the USSR: until the 1980s it was always Hate Week for Orwell in the Soviet Union. Despite the frequent and shrill castigation of his work in party organs (*Pravda* dubbed him "Enemy of Mankind"), none of his books has ever been officially published in the USSR, or in any East European nation aligned with Moscow. Numerous references to and even reviews of *Animal Farm* and *1984* have appeared in the Soviet press since the late 1940s. But until recently, an official import ban existed on Orwell's work, Soviet citizens were jailed for possessing his books, and tourists had their copies seized upon entry to the Soviet Union.

In the 1950s, like "Goldstein" in Oceania, "Orwell" was a bogeyman word in the Communist press. *Pravda* and *Izvestia* misidentified him as an American and called him "a literary police agent" and "a venal writer on orders...from Wall Street." With the thawing out of the Cold War in the 1960s, he was usually ignored as an "unperson." Meanwhile, *1984* was trumpeted as a satirical portrait of the U.S.—with the Thought Police as J. Edgar Hoover's FBI, the Pentagon as the Ministry of Peace, etc.

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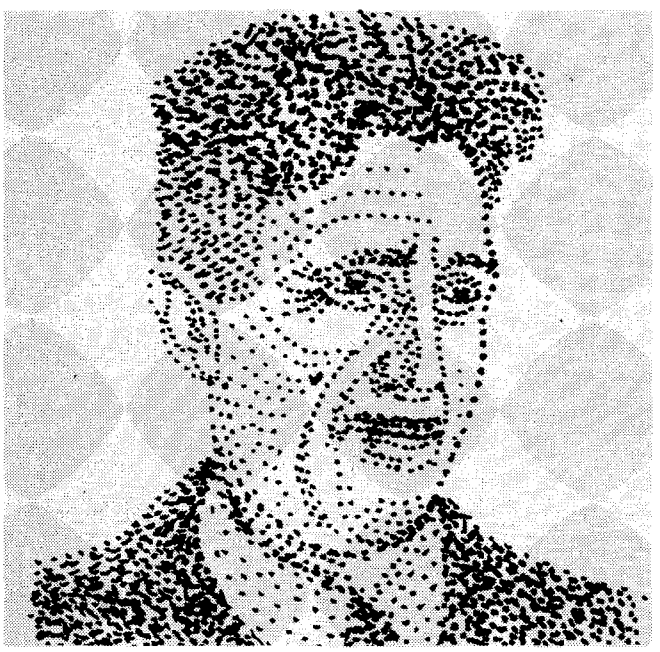
In 1983-84 the "mutability of the past" became complete. The erstwhile Enemy of Mankind emerged, mirabile dictu, Comrade Orwell (as the Anglo-American Left, including leading Marxists [Raymond Williams], post-structuralist radicals [Christopher Norris], and radical feminists [Daphne Patai], were loudly *dis*owning him and laying much of the blame for the postwar failures of Western socialism at his feet). A 1983 issue of the Soviet weekly *New Times* hailed Orwell as a worker's hero who "shared dry crusts with the clochards of Paris" and in *1984* took "the exact measure of real capitalism."

Since May, Orwell is no longer being excoriated in the Soviet press as a "troubadour of the Cold War." The anonymous introduction to the excerpt in the *Literary Gazette* conceded, if somewhat obliquely, that Stalinist Russia had served as a model for *1984*, and it also frankly criticized the party for its long-standing proscriptions against the novel.

The decision to issue an unabridged edition of *1984* in the literary monthly *Novy Mir (New World)* in upcoming months follows similar gestures toward several long-suppressed anti-Stalinist novels by Soviet writers. Recent months have witnessed the serialization of Yevgeni Zamyatin's *We*, Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*, Vasily Grossman's *Life and Fate*, Andrei Platanov's *Chevengur*, and Anatoly Rybakov's *Children of the Arbat*, all of them printed entire as part of Gorbachev's heralded crusade to reevaluate the Stalin years and enlist intellectual and popular support for a thoroughgoing revamping of the Soviet bureaucracy and the Communist party. Unlike Orwell's earlier phases of reception, the Soviet intelligentsia today appears open to approaching *1984* as a politically committed artwork inviting the Soviet Union to criticize itself along with the novel.

But how thoroughgoing will Soviet self-criticism be? Even as the introduction to the *Literary Gazette* extract acknowledged that *1984* bore relevance to Stalinist Russia, it suggested that Orwell's main target was fascism. "He asked a difficult question: Couldn't fascism find fertile ground in England and, if so, how soon? How will it appear? What form will it take? Thus arose the shape of the novel." Indeed, neither Stalin nor Stalinism is specifically mentioned in the introduction—although—mutatis mutandis—Big Brother is likened to Chairman Mao, Hate Week is identified with Islam, and the "totalitarian shadowing" of the population by means of "the newest electronic equipment" is called "a reality precisely in the advanced countries of the West, most of all America."



Old habits die hard. Thus Sergei Zalygin, editor of *Novy Mir*, could write: "It's possible that Orwell wrote his book with a concrete address—the address of socialism. But the time has passed when the book,...to put it delicately, embarrasses us."

Has it? Not yet, it would seem. Perhaps even more embarrassing for the Soviets is *Animal Farm*, whose "concrete address" could not be clearer. Indeed, one might have assumed that the one-to-one correspondences between historical events and this biting allegory of the Bolshevik Revolution and postrevolutionary era would have been inescapable. But the September *Nedelya* notes only that *Animal Farm* is "surprisingly contemporary." It is "directed against those who make a mockery of [socialist] ideals, openly or in a disguised way, against political demagoguery and political adventurism." No mention is made of the fable's historical referents.

Likewise, the March and July issues of *Rodnik*, published by the Latvian Communist party, blatantly contradict Orwell's statement (in the original Ukrainian preface of 1947) that his main goal in *Animal Farm* was to "expose the myth" that "Russia is a Socialist country." Instead *Rodnik* declared that *Animal Farm* pertains to Hitler's June 1934 purge of Ernst Roehm and the S.A., and to the 1937-38 liquidation of the anarchist militias in the Spanish Civil War. In a single passing phrase, the editors add that *Animal Farm* refers to "the Moscow trials of 1937" as well. But then come the old appeals to historical realism and universalism. Readers will find it "impossible to support" the fable's portrait of a time of "exultant tyranny." "People have tried many times to connect *Animal Farm* to our history, but such efforts are biased, not to mention that they water down the author's intention." The *Rodnik* editors conclude that Orwell's "grotesque animal paradise" is "multifaceted," possesses special (though unspecified) "contemporary relevance," and is "by no means open to a simple [i.e., single] interpretation."

All this involves much more than misleading literary criticism or historical inaccuracies. The case of "Comrade Orwell" is significant precisely because it is a locus where the anxious jumble of hopes, fears, and tensions pressing upon Soviet attempts to confront the past converge and convolute. One result is a good deal of strenuously acrobatic doublethinking.

Opening the books on the Soviet past, then, is not just a

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matter of dumping "stagnant prohibitions." The "embarrassment" about *Animal Farm* and *1984* concerns nothing less than how to connect the Leninist-Stalinist past with the Gorbachevite present. How far can Gorbachev's "new thinking" proceed before it undercuts a family tree traceable to the Revolution, and thereby threatens the foundations of the Soviet political system? How far can the unwriting of the rewritten history go before it subverts the party's very claim to embody and interpret "historical truth"?

Ideas have consequences that are not easily calibrated. In late November, just weeks after *Rodnik* published the secret codicils of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact—revealing the sordid details of Stalin's secret deal with Hitler leading to the illegal 1940 annexation of the Baltic republics—the sitting parliament of the Estonian Republic declared its sovereignty from Moscow. Recently Latvians, Lithuanians, and Georgians have protested against proposed amendments to the Soviet Constitution. "The protests are part of *perestroika*," Gorbachev explained weakly during his December visit in Paris. "*Glasnost* and *perestroika* have permitted people to express their opinions on problems which have accumulated over the years." The most recent "expression of opinion" has been the Azeri-fomented civil war in the non-Russian southern republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia. How far can Gorbachev afford to let such "protests" go? Will the all-too-familiar hard-line calls for the jackboot on the human face prevail?

Life does not begin at seventy-one. And yet, only after seven decades is the Soviet Union at last seriously confronting what the Germans refer to as *die unbewaltigte Vergangenheit*, "the unmastered past." However, William Pfaff has noted that, unlike the case of Germany and the Nazi revolution, Soviet authorities have no watershed event by which to disclaim continuity and thereby disavow their past: the Soviet Communist party has ruled without a break since 1917. Thus the party and the Soviet system, not just one man and his "cult of personality," are in some sense responsible for "vaporizing" 17 million Enemies of Mankind in the 1930s and 1940s. No amount of duckspeaking can evade the dilemma: the party's claims to legitimacy rest upon its continuity with the past, which the party speakwriters have rewritten and re-rewritten since Lenin and Stalin; but the more that the historical truth emerges and *does* evince an unbroken succession of party coverups, the more difficult become party efforts to "contain" the horrific past and the less secure become party claims to legitimacy in the present.

"There should be no forgotten names and blank pages in Soviet history," declared Gorbachev in a much-quoted statement last year. He and other supporters of rapid cultural liberalization have calculated that they can resuscitate unpersons and fill in memory holes as needed to build public trust and improve the performance of the Soviet system. They figure that they can master the present *by* leaving the past unmastered, i.e., by circumscribing the Stalin era and merely adjusting the official record. More concerned with economic reconstruction and party reform than with literary policy, they reason that any harm done to Soviet claims of legitimacy by the publication of "mere" fiction about the "quickly receding" past will be outweighed by gains in credibility and popular support for *perestroika*. This may be wishful thinking. But in all events, what we are witnessing at present is not a cultural revolution, but a very partial reclamation project. Skeptical Benjamin, the donkey of *Animal Farm*—like George Orwell—would not be fooled. □

SCREEN

OUT ON A LIMB

RECAP & 'ACCIDENTAL TOURIST'

What were the best films of 1988? No single work had the force of last year's *The Last Emperor* or the year before's *Platoon*. But there were some good films to choose from, perhaps more than on average. I keep my list to seven; I can't see 500 movies, and readers may want to nominate a few I don't mention.

First, a word of caution. Some films don't appear here (*Babette's Feast*, *Stand and Deliver*), because they were released *before* January 1, 1988 in New York or Los Angeles to qualify for the 1988 Oscars. My list is shaped by this timetable.

Limited though they are, comedies lead the list, particularly *Working Girl*, *Bull Durham*, and *Big*. All three were finely written, and Melanie Griffith in *Working Girl* was actress of the year. From abroad came another extravagantly wild work, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, and the stark, stirring, political melodrama, *A World Apart*. *Mississippi Burning* and Clint Eastwood's *Bird*—for all their defects—handled difficult subjects with power and integrity. Gene Hackman in the former and Forest Whitaker in the latter were best actors of the year.

Honorable mention goes to Dustin Hoffman and his recent *Rain Man*; the Cannes Palme D'Or winner, *Pelle the Conqueror* (on the verge of going into national release); and *Eight Men Out*, from America's most promising, but not-yet-fully-successful director, John Sayles. A special award goes to the re-released *The Manchurian Candidate*, the scariest film on screen in 1988.

I liked parts of or performances in *A Cry in the Dark*, *Everybody's All-American*, *Tucker*, the sadly underdistributed *Summer Story*, and (yes!), *The Last Temptation of Christ*. Nineteen eighty-eight will long be remembered as the year of Scorsese. I suppose we will have to endure now a rehash of the turmoil last summer when the film was released; every nomination or award will rouse its critics again. To be sure, high praises will be heaped upon the film only for political reasons: its defenders overrate it because they perceive the issue of free speech under attack. The film was profoundly flawed, both from moral and aesthetic standpoints: but it did

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have *moments*. The irony of the whole story is that those moments were among the greatest ever depicted in any film on a religious subject. It's dishonest, and unfair, not to honor them.

Accidental Tourist was named Best Film of the Year by the New York Film Critics. But it doesn't travel well from Anne Tyler's novel to film, despite the presence of William Hurt and Kathleen Turner. There are three good scenes, all at the beginning, and sporadic moments of comedy and pathos afterward, but the film never catches fire. It's directed (and partly written) by Lawrence Kasdan, who made *The Big Chill* and *Body Heat*—not masterpieces, but good blends of words, character, and wit on screen. So what went wrong when he turned to the novel?

Tyler's work centers on one Macon Leary who is, well, "leery" of life: cool, distant, watchful. He writes travel books in an "accidental tourist" series, tailored for business travelers who wish they hadn't left home and want minimal contact with the places they visit, especially if foreign. The film's first two scenes artfully catch the comedy of Tyler's send-up of a certain kind of American abroad. Hurt also catches her Leary, especially as he becomes even truer to his name—almost affectless—after the murder of his only son (dealt with both in novel and film in flashback). Macon's wife can't take their life together after the murder; in the film's third scene, Turner shows her hand at melodrama with an affective leave-taking.

So far, so very good. But problems arise when, faithful to the novel's development, Kasdan introduces the second woman in Macon's life, a flamboyant animal "hotel" owner and dog trainer, Muriel Pritchett. Geena Davis plays Muriel, and she's out of her depth. Davis has been around before (in *Tootsie* and *The Fly*); she's competent; but her choice (and presumably Kasdan's) is to play Muriel perky, fast, and off-key. As a result, she never attains the comic authority Muriel must have for the tale to work in any medium. Tyler's Muriel is vulgar, impolite, unpredictable, demanding—everything Macon, his wife, and (one senses) Tyler is not; Muriel is a trashy trip through the id. By the time she walks into Tyler's novel, you're desperate for some fire and pizzazz, and her entry makes the rest work. Without a strong Muriel, the tale is limp; Davis never fumbles, but she never knocks your socks off, and she has to. Too bad she and Turner didn't trade places.

There are further problems. Tyler's work thrives on parallels: leave-takings between husbands and wives; attachments and rejections between lovers; and subplots involving Macon's publisher, brothers, and sister (Amy Wright, strong in support). The family provides good comic vignettes; though from Baltimore, they derive from those families of ever-daffy eccentrics in novels from well below the Mason-Dixon Line. But the value of these side moments is diminished by the films's too faithful inclusion of detail. It bogs down by being too literary.

While faithful in detail, the film is completely unfaithful on the more critical issue of texture. Kasdan has made the film for Warner Brothers, and its hi-gloss production values overwhelm the delicate nature of Tyler's text. Less money spent on gorgeous settings, less full-bodied cinematography, less perfect hair (on each star) would have meant more. The film is all-Hollywood; the novel is either wacky middle class or slum Baltimore. As it is, the film doesn't look, feel, or move right. The issue, of course, isn't whether or not the film is faithful to the novel, but whether or not it is a good film. *Accidental Tourist* is not, on its own cinematic terms. But knowing the novel helps us understand why—and what could have been done differently. To make Tyler's work sing on screen, Kasdan had to find some acceptably pop form of film minimalism. Old clichés about the organic nature of texts here take on real life. The film is often incongruous with the essence, the spirit of Tyler's fable. It would have worked better dramatically if Kasdan's style had been as laid back, as slim, as Macon Leary's. You can't do Tyler and not ask Warner's to take more risks, especially in reining in studio overkill. Warner's probably feels out on a limb doing a film about people, not car crashes, terrorists, or drug dealers, but when you're after quality, why not go whole hog? *Accidental Tourist* is a curious symbol of all Kasdan's work; he uses a studio to reach for art. This time, despite noble intentions and some real craft, he fails.

TOM O'BRIEN

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The search for a final absolution

A BRIGHT SHINING LIE
John Paul Vann
and America in Vietnam
Neil Sheehan
Random House, $24.95, 862 pp.

Don Luce

The great value of Neil Sheehan's book is that it gives an understanding of why Americans were resented by the Vietnamese and why the United States lost the war.

John Paul Vann, the hero of *A Bright Shining Lie*, had a compulsive need to dominate women sexually and men professionally. To many Vietnamese, Vann was just another colonialist. He used them, looked down on them, and asked them to keep fighting — no matter what the cost to them. It was clear to Vann that it was America's war. Yet he never understood why "our" Vietnamese never fought as well as the other side. Unfortunately, Neil Sheehan has not grasped this. What Sheehan does capture is the anger, frustration, and often utter helplessness of U.S. advisors in Vietnam.

A Bright Shining Lie is, in many ways, an attempt to absolve American responsibility. The Vietnamese on the U.S. side are presented as inept, corrupt, and uncaring. Vann, Sheehan argues, tried to stop the indiscriminate killing of women, children, and livestock. But Vann concluded that most Saigon officers "did not feel any guilt over this butchery and sadism. He had come to see that they regarded the peasantry as some sort of subspecies. They were not taking human life and destroying human homes. They were exterminating treacherous animals and stamping out their dens."

Sheehan should have pointed out two things here: first, that many Vietnamese did deeply care and were torn apart by the destruction of the lives of their countrymen; second, that the U.S. put these men in power.

Vann believed that the solution was to put American officers in charge. That the French had tried this with such failure did not seem to bother Vann. He and his supporters felt that if they were in charge, they could reform the Saigon army into an efficient, honest, and tactically brilliant machine. In Vann's plan, the senior American advisor would be the real governor of each province.

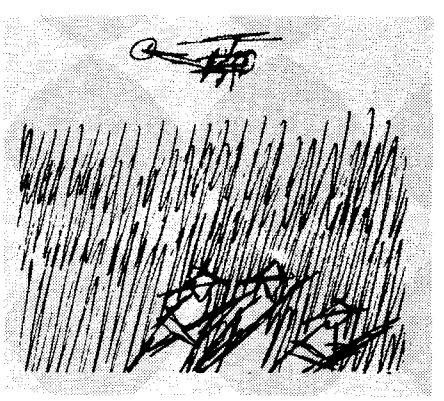
In 1965, Vann wrote a friend in Denver: "We're going to lose because of the moral degeneration in South Vietnam coupled with the excellent discipline of the VC....I'm bitter...not at these ridiculous little Oriental play soldiers—but at our goddamn military geniuses and politicians for refusing to admit and act on the obvious—to take over the command of this operation lock, stock, and barrel."

Most Americans will love this book. It is well-written; there is suspense in Vann's "shameful secret"; the descriptions give a real feel for Vietnam during the war. And *A Bright Shining Lie* tells us exactly what many have been wanting to hear: If Americans had taken charge, we would have won the war. And we're given a hero, a Lawrence of Vietnam by the name of John Paul Vann: "In this war without heroes, this man had been the one compelling figure. The intensity and distinctiveness of his character and the courage and drama of his life had seemed to sum up so many of the qualities Americans admired in themselves as a people."

Sheehan writes that American attitudes after World War II were "influenced by a racism so profound that Americans usually did not realize they were applying a racist double standard in Asia." Yet Sheehan's own descriptions of the Vietnamese contains this same racism. His description of the young Ho Chi Minh when he tried to visit Western statesmen negotiating the Treaty of Versailles is an example of this: "In the Paris of the day, he was a ridiculous figure, this twenty-eight-year-old Vietnamese with the oddly intense eyes aping a European gentleman in white tie and tails."

Vann's "secret shame" was the statutory rape of his family's baby-sitter. She was, Sheehan writes, an overweight, fifteen-year-old, not pretty, and emotionally withdrawn and unhappy with her family life. Vann started an affair with her, the book tells us, because "men as sexually insecure as Vann are sometimes drawn to girls like this."

Conviction of rape would have destroyed Vann's career. Vann beat the case by getting his wife, Mary Jane, to lie for him and by learning how to fool the lie-detector machine himself (after experimenting with drugs and tranquilizers, he determined that staying awake for forty-eight hours and answering the questions in a confident manner worked best). When they received the news that the charges had been dropped, Mary Jane said that she guessed he'd learned his lesson.



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"I sure as hell have," Vann replied. "Next time I'll make goddam sure they're old enough."

Vann didn't get caught again—though he did maintain two mistresses in Saigon. Annie, the youngest, was seventeen when they met in 1966. By the end of that year, she was pregnant. Vann talked her into an abortion because he said his career would be hurt if it became known that he had fathered an illegitimate child (later he did have a daughter with Annie—while married to both her and Mary Jane).

Neil Sheehan has chronicled his life of John Paul Vann in brilliant and compelling prose. It is best as the biography of a complex man. Vann is with us every page of the book. It is at its worst in its description of the Vietnamese, most of whom come off as weak, inept people that Vann manipulated.

Sheehan's book would have been strengthened by including material on some of the strong Vietnamese who influenced Vann's life. For example, the commanding Viet Cong general in the area where Vann spent most of his time in Vietnam was Madame Nguyen Thi Dinh. Ironically, she is not mentioned in the book. To be defeated over and over by a Vietnamese woman must have hurt Vann deeply. I asked Mrs. Dinh in Hanoi about Vann's work and the fact that she was not mentioned in the book about him: "Oh, I understand. Men do not like to talk about women generals. Even Vietnamese men, and we have a history of famous women generals....Yes, we knew Mr. Vann. It must be hard for his family. It is so hard for so many families."

John Paul Vann was the hero of the American press corps in Saigon. He was daring, articulate, and unorthodox. He was what Americans wanted—a take-charge man who feared nothing. But he was not what the Vietnamese wanted. He had little respect for their culture. He used them as the French had. They became objects for him to manipulate.

Vann died in a helicopter crash in 1972. It was not, as he would have wished, a wild battle in the sky. Rather, Vann had bullied a new pilot into flying in a tropical storm. Their copter crashed in a tribal graveyard. □

[T]he difficulties in adapting to nuclear reality may not be entirely of a cognitive nature. People have the capability to grasp the new condition, but there is some resistance to doing so consistently and to adapting traditional policies fully to this new condition. This suggests there may be conflicting motives involved; one set of motives desires to adapt to the new reality and another to persevere in the prenuclear mode.

—Steven Kull
Minds at War

RUNNING FOR COVER

MINDS AT WAR
Steven Kull
Basic Books, $19.95, 352 pp.

Leon V. Sigal

Nuclear strategy seems driven by rationalism, at least at first glance. Strategists act in the belief that they can master the forces of nature by careful calculation—not only in peacetime, but also in times of crisis or war. In Herman Kahn's words, "The presence of nuclear weapons is likely to prove a powerful inducement to clear and/or cautious thinking."

Beneath the surface of cool rationality, however, the very logic of nuclear deterrence is rife with contradiction. How can the United States deter the Soviet Union by threats that it manifestly would have little or no incentive to carry out? So long as each superpower has nuclear forces capable of surviving attack and retaliating in kind, how can more nuclear weapons—or more accurate ones—add to deterrence?

Once the Soviet Union as well as the United States acquired that capability, it became difficult to raise the cost of war to one side without doing so for the other. Under this condition of nuclear interdependence, deterrence means manipulating the shared risk of a nuclear war neither side can afford. Yet attempts at manipulation could provoke unintended war in a crisis. Should either superpower come to believe that war is imminent, it would have some incentive to shoot first as a last resort. Thu. , steps taken to reduce the risk of premeditated war by exploring or improving one's nuclear arsenal by either superpower may only raise the risk of preemptive war.

The recognition that nuclear strategy is a contradiction in terms has long been a staple of the academic literature. Military strategy necessarily implies a rational economy of force, some proportionality between means and ends. By sheer destructiveness and indiscriminateness, however, the Bomb demolishes any meaningful distinction between winning and losing and turns means-ends calculation into an absurdity. With the advent of nuclear interdependence, strategy has reached a dead end.

Steven Kull appreciates many of the dilemmas of deterrence and the resulting contradictions in policy, especially in proposals that call for overmatching the other side's nuclear arsenal, qualitatively or quantitatively; for deploying weapons with a capacity to destroy the other side's weapons and command-and-control (so-called "hard-target kill" capability); for "prevailing" in the event of a nuclear war; and for trying to develop strategic defenses to protect populations against nuclear attack.

Kull's book, *Minds at War*, breaks new ground by going beyond the clash of nuclear doctrine with nuclear reality. It exposes these doctrinal dilemmas through conversations with practicing Russian and American nuclear strategists. Kull's is an insistent voice, probing

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inconsistencies in strategists' reasoning as they shift back and forth between two strains of nuclear thought: an *adaptive* strain that acknowledges the profound impact that nuclear weapons have had on strategy and diplomacy, and tries to adjust to it; and a *traditional* strain that denies the difference that nuclear weapons make.

The traditional strain, which gets most of Kull's attention, assumes that nuclear devices are weapons like any other, hence usable and likely to be used. It follows that the more weapons the United States has, the better it is for deterrence, and that marginal superiority will reassure allies and instill caution in foes. Even as some acknowledge the irrationality of actually engaging in a nuclear war, those in the grip of traditionalism still cling, almost desperately says Kull, to prenuclear thought in a vain attempt to deny present-day reality.

At one level, Kull's conversations with U.S. and Soviet analysts and policymakers, in government and out, bring home the wisdom of Orwell's observation that "political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible...designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give the appearance of solidity to mere wind." But Kull has a deeper intent. As a practicing psychologist he recognizes the poignancy, indeed the pain, that internally inconsistent beliefs can produce and the struggle of patients to ignore, deny, or otherwise cope with that inconsistency. Behind the confusion, evasion, ambivalence, and denial he discerns not logic, but psycho-logic at work.

Exploring the irrational resistance of prenuclear attitudes to change, Kull uncovers the symbolic value of the Bomb. Nuclear weapons are totems so meaningful that strategists seem willing to worship them even if doing so sacrifices security. He cites the desire to deploy hard-target kill capability as "an expression of a wish to make nuclear war [somehow] controllable...of the urge to assimilate nuclear war into a conventional war paradigm."

Perhaps so, but Kull neglects to mention that nuclear disarmers may be no less in thrall of the Bomb as symbol. Drastic cuts, it is true, may lower the risk of an accident, but under present conditions, there is no reason to believe that the fewer weapons the superpowers have, the safer the world would be. With weapons of this magnitude, the difference between 500 and 25,000 is not as significant as those who press for reductions want to think. The crucial question is not numbers but the *kind* of weapons. (For example, deploying even a relatively small number of accurate MX or SS18 missiles in vulnerable silos arguably increases the risk that the other side will resort to first strike in the event of a crisis.)

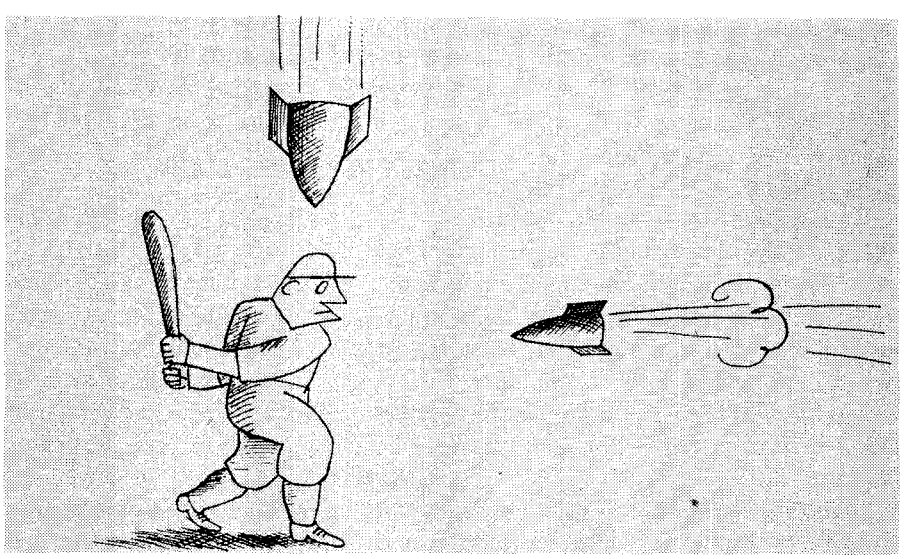
Nor is there any reason to believe that the abolition of nuclear weapons would make the world safest of all. Lacking the means of retaliation or the certainty that covert production of nuclear weapons can be detected, how could disarmed states assure they would not become vulnerable to nuclear attack? Would the balance of power in a disarmed world, with many states capable of covertly producing nuclear devices as a hedge against uncertainty, be *more* precarious than it is today?

Kull does not go far enough in exposing the contradictions in nuclear thinking. Traditionalists who advocate waging and winning nuclear wars do not stand alone in their inconsistency. The adaptivists whom Kull favors, as I do, reject prenuclear thought that superiority matters. They attempt to adapt to nuclear interdependence by advocating arms control agreements and reduced reliance on nuclear deterrence. But this position poses contradictions of its own. How can reducing the threat of nuclear war bolster deterrence? How rational is it to base deterrence on the threat that any war may escalate out of control even if neither side intended it?

Neither the adaptive nor the traditional strain in strategic thought can escape the fundamental contradiction posed by nuclear interdependence, between deterring premeditated war by policies that, in a crisis, invite preemptive war.

Consistency of belief, however, may be no improvement over inconsistency. For instance, the assumption that nuclear war is inevitable may undergird the belief system of some traditionalists. That assumption avoids many, though not all, of the contradictions in their doctrine. Yet restoring consistency in that way may turn out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy, one that hardly makes the world a safer place.

Deep-seated resistance to a change of mind is a well-documented finding of cognitive psychology. It is difficult to square that finding with Kull's optimistic conclusion that the "rationality" of the adaptivists will triumph and that security will ultimately dominate symbolism. Nuclear weapons do have profound effects on today's world. Perhaps most profound is their capacity to mock man's rationality. That may be what strategists have in mind when they talk about thinking the unthinkable. □



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THE PACIFIST CONTRADICTION

PEACE AND REVOLUTION
The Moral Crisis of American Pacifism
Guenter Lewy
Eerdmans, $19.95, 283 pp.

Staughton Lynd

This book surveys the intellectual development of the American peace movement since 1965. Professor Lewy reviews the changing policy positions of the American Friends Service Committee, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the War Resisters League, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. He finds that all four organizations have abandoned a pacifist witness.

More particularly, Lewy concludes that during and after the Vietnam war American pacifists experienced a conflict of loyalties between the ideal of nonviolence and an aspiration to liberate the exploited and oppressed. With few exceptions, according to Lewy, pacifists resolved this tension by uncritically supporting third-world revolution. They advocated unconditional United States withdrawal from Vietnam although aware that this was "a sure recipe for an NFL victory." Similarly they have tried to stop military intervention in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Moreover, Lewy says, pacifists in their bitterness and frustration have engaged in civil disobedience that sought to obstruct decisions by a majority of their fellow citizens, thus circumventing and denying the legitimacy and binding character of the democratic process. Finally, in Lewy's telling of the story, pacifists have adopted the "nonexclusion" policy of other protest organizations of the period so that they have become "an integral part of the New Left," or worse, "assumed the posture of Communist fellow travelers."

Everyone who lived through these struggles will share certain of Professor Lewy's concerns. I am especially drawn to his insistence that the same ethical standards should be applied to all sides in a social conflict. In the spring of 1966, a young man representing Bertrand Russell's War Crimes Tribunal asked me to become a part of that body. I said that I thought the Tribunal should be open to evidence of crimes by any combatant in Vietnam. For example, I said, if evidence were forthcoming that the NFL tortured unarmed prisoners, surely that should be characterized as a "crime." My interlocutor responded, "Anything is justified that drives the American aggressor into the sea." I was shocked and did not join the Tribunal.

Similary, as Lewy notes, in the May 1975 WIN symposium on the end of the war in Vietnam, I said the peace movement should "apply the same tests of lawful and humane behavior to all governments, and...expect that a revolutionary government in Vietnam, like all governments, will imprison people unjustly, will betray the rhetoric that brought it to power, and will need to be resisted." Later, when the new government of Vietnam, in my view, did exactly that by imprisoning persons indefinitely without due process, I joined Jim Forest, Tom Cornell, Daniel Berrigan, and Joan Baez in publicly protesting.

Nevertheless, I believe the argument of *Peace and Revolution* is profoundly mistaken.

In the first place, while Lewy's narrative draws on primary research in the archives of the peace movement, his scholarship is embedded in a larger framework of assumptions. These assumptions can charitably be termed unproven. They include Professor Lewy's beliefs that "contact with the West has been the prime agent of material progress in the third world," that "[m]ultinational corporations...do not operate in the most backward countries," that the Duarte government in El Salvador is self-evidently preferable to the "repressive Communist regime" in Nicaragua, and so on. Such simplistic judgments are urged more and more stridently in the closing chapters of the book.

Indeed, it seems to me that the difference between Professor Lewy and us whom he criticizes is not about pacifism at all. All those whom Lewy attacks have remained pacifists. Not one has taken up arms in the manner of the Reverends Camilo Torres in Colombia or Gasper Garcia Laviana in Nicaragua. What disturbs Lewy is that, while remaining pacifists, we have chosen to place ourselves as best we can at the side of third-world and other oppressed people, and, in Archbishop Romero's phrase, to "accompany" them in their struggle.

Lewy cannot logically criticize those who remain personal pacifists but work in tension with, yet in the context of, a larger movement that uses violence. He believes that we *should* work within the framework of a larger movement that uses violence, but the movement he wants us to be part of is the governmental process of the United States. Thus he praises what he believes to be the orientation of American pacifism before the 1960s, when (so Lewy thinks) "[w]hile personally unwilling to bear arms, American pacifists respected the democratic process and did not attempt to prevent their fellow citizens from fulfilling their patriotic duties." His difference with the third-world bias of long-time pacifists David Dellinger or David McReynolds is a question of political judgment.

In my opinion, Lewy's point of view caricatures both the reality of countries like El Salvador and Nicaragua, and the history of American pacifism. He praises El Salvador because there are fewer death squad killings but does not mention that Nicaragua has abolished the death penalty. He contends that to oppose United States military aid to the current government of El Salvador is simply to support Marxist-Leninist revolution. Yet Archbishop Romero passionately opposed such aid on the ground that it hindered self-determination, pleading with President Carter that to send arms

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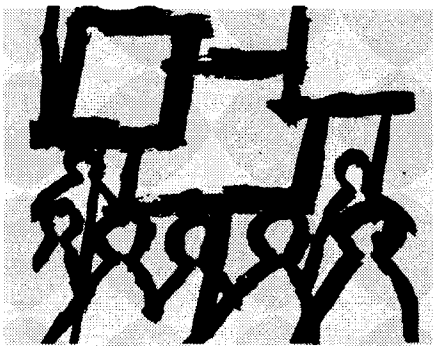

and military advisers "will undoubtedly sharpen the injustice and the repression inflicted on the organized people." Lewy overlooks the evidence for tension *within* the revolutionary process in Nicaragua, such as the presence of three priests in key cabinet positions, the government's confession of error with regard to its policy toward the Miskito Indians, the reopening of *La Prensa*, and the repeal of the state of emergency.

Finally, Professor Lewy's conception of pacifism is a minority tradition in the American peace community. He would have pacifists give to God what is God's (by refusing to bear arms) and to Caesar what is Caesar's (by declining to obstruct the decisions of the national government). Certain Protestant denominations, for example the Hutterites, share this outlook. Others, like the Quakers, for the most part do not. They aided fugitive slaves although the Fugitive Slave Act was properly passed by Congress. They have considered that being one with God was a majority.

While wishing to be good citizens and prizing American democracy, many pacifists have also believed that there were things more important than this nation's survival, as Thoreau did when he wrote, "[t]his people must cease to hold slaves, and to make war on Mexico, though it cost them their existence as people." I ask Professor Lewy and those influenced by his book to recognize that the pacifism he praises is only one variant of pacifism; that civil disobedience on behalf of the oppressed also has deep roots; and that for some, there is common motivation in resisting the military commands of the state and resisting the institutionalized violence of economic and class repression.

Above all, I think that what is most asked of us is not criticism of others, but to find new creativity and persistence in acting out nonviolence ourselves. □

CAN SOCIAL THEORY SAVE US?

THE RADICAL RENEWAL
The Politics of Ideas in Modern America
Norman Birnbaum
Pantheon, $16.95, 265 pp.

Jean Bethke Elshtain

Norman Birnbaum is a witty, erudite thinker and observer. But *The Radical Renewal* is a frustrating book. Birnbaum offers up a smorgasbord of contemporary social thought and thinkers rather than a sustained, in-depth treatment. As a bibliographical survey it is helpful and Birnbaum obliges by compressing much of the text into a twenty-page "Bibliographical Note." Although we are treated to a number of sparkling Birnbaumian bons-mots, the book is repetitious and has about it an air of incompletion.

Birnbaum insists, rightly, that a "social theory" is not and can never be "an articulated set of propositions subject to verification or falsification by experiments." But his alternative is problematic. He deems social theory a product of a group reflection—itself a notion that needs parsing—and then goes on to insist that such theorizing is "not a record of experience alone but an effort to master it." But why should social theory aim at "mastery"? "Mastering" experience, whether as social thought or political action is an imperative many of our most important contemporary social critics, including several Birnbaum cites with approval, regard as one of the most problematic fruits of post-Enlightenment rationalizing hubris. Perhaps I'm packing more into the term than Birnbaum intends. All the more reason, then, for him to tell us what this "mastery" entails and why social thought and political action should aim at it.

The Radical Renewal is additionally vexing because Birnbaum frequently attaches no names to modes of thought he chides or, alternatively, he overstocks his pages with a series of names—often last names—of thinkers whose work he finds helpful or exemplary. Thus "Hartz, Hofstadter, Diggins, Lears." The academic reader will certainly recognize Hartz and Hofstadter but Diggins and Lears (and they are just two in a very large, unwieldy company) will not immediately be recognized by nonspecialists. Feminism gets compressed into the names Carol Gilligan and Barbara Ehrenreich, with Ann Douglas and Jean Baker Miller treated glancingly. Yet the projects of these writers are not of a piece. When Birnbaum notes that "If these feminists are to be believed, we will all have to speak with a different voice," he overassimilates Gilligan's perspective to the views of others. Ehrenreich has been scathing in her indictment of feminists who elaborate women's difference. Thus it is never really clear what Birnbaum means to endorse by invoking feminism.

The plot thickens in light of Birnbaum's frequent laudatory references to the work of Christopher Lasch. For Lasch is on record in numerous essays and books as a skeptical, at times mordant, critic of many of the presumptions and political actions of feminists, antinuclearists, environmentalists—that is, of the movements and attitudes Birnbaum embraces. Most importantly, Lasch challenges the progressivist teleology of the Western left, including Marxism, and sees in the bureaucratized nation-state—any modern state—a danger to democracy, not an instrument for its completion. Yet Birnbaum's own point of political yearning flows from the New

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Deal—heady days of social experimentation and reform that canalized multiple political energies in and through a "positive State." He seeks a "new New Deal."

No new deal lies on the horizon. The reason is not simply the lack of political mobilization, right-wing reaction, or "false-consciousness," but a growing awareness on the part of social critics of the limits to state-engineered, liberal reform. To set one's sights in that direction—if *radical* renewal is at stake—seems incompatible with worries about centralized power, the growth in managerial, unaccountable elites, and all the rest.

Birnbaum comes close to acknowledging this conundrum in a poignant passage. He writes: "We are wiser now, and have learned that the past is a matter of interpretation and the future open: historically, we do not put our trust in progressive sequences of a philosophically or politically irresistible kind. We have experienced, in other terms, too many reversals." But, as a man wise to the tumult and tragedy of the twentieth century, Birnbaum recognizes that the future is *never* open to any and all forms of experimentation. And, as well, he knows that what looks from one perspective like a "reversal" may, in fact, be a fruitful rethinking of how to engage and reappropriate traditional values and verities rather than jettison them entirely.

Here Birnbaum misses a real opportunity to enlarge the scope of academic and political debate. Unlike most thinkers on the left, for whom Catholic social thought is anathema or merely beyond the range of serious consideration, Birnbaum treats the tradition from *Rerum novarum* through *Laborem exercens* and *Sollicitudo rei socialis* with cautious respect. I wish he had turned his analytic skills to an elaboration of this alternative mode of social thought. It might offer an alternative to capitalist consumerism and state socialism alike.

As an admirer of Birnbaum's presence and spirit, I hope he will move from this prolepsis to an in-depth exegesis of that mode of social thought he believes offers the best prospect for a decent future. My hunch is that Birnbaum himself wavers concerning this prospect, hence he deflects this discursive challenge. There are just too many references in his text to "the degradation of public discourse, the cretinization of the public" (a most unhappy locution) to assure us that any sort of renewal is possible, let alone one deserving the sobriquet "radical."

Yet in the paragraph that follows fast on the heels of the one in which degradation and cretinization are signaled, Birnbaum chastises "these critics" who lament the fact that modern populations increasingly refuse "to treat elites with deference and to take their orders." Who are we modern citizens, then? A cretinized public? Or savvy unmaskers of the machinations of self-interested elites?

Birnbaum needs to sort out whether social theory, as one feature of a politics that will save us, should take radical democratic directions (as Lasch recommends) or whether it requires, instead, a beefed-up and ever more powerful state.

> *In the past, the existence of a public has encouraged and sustained thought. It is excessively artificial to ask for a renewal of public intellectual life for the sake of renewal. It will come when demand in our society evokes a readiness among our scholars and thinkers to move onto different terrain.*
>
> *—Norman Birnbaum*
> The Radical Renewal

In other words, Birnbaum needs to move from "the politics of ideas," with its intensive focus on "who, whom," towards "ideas of politics" in contemporary America. *That,* finally, is the heart of whether there is to be renewal and, if so, what sort. I, for one, hope he undertakes this task. □

WHEN ALL THE CHIPS ARE DOWN

IN THE AGE OF THE SMART MACHINE
Shoshona Zuboff
Basic Books, Inc., $19.95, 468 pp.

Bernhard Wilpert

The rising flood of books on the organizational, economic, and societal impact of new technologies signals the widespread mixture of apprehension, fear, hope, and enthusiasm associated with technological change. In 1982, the Club of Rome expressed this in the title of its report, "Microelectronics and Society: For Better or for Worse," a title that also suggests why many such publications quickly pass into oblivion. Not so *In the Age of the Smart Machine*, which explores the dilemmas and options posed by computer-mediated information systems in the workplace.

Shoshona Zuboff tells her story with such acuity and convincing evidence that anyone whose work life is organized around "smart machines" will find it hard to put the book down. Based on several years of research in organizations as diverse as newspapers, pulp mills, insurance companies, and banks, Zuboff argues that all of the dilemmas presented by computerization and the available options for resolving them have two fundamental characteristics, both intrinsic to information technology: automating and informating.

The logic of *automating* is to extend the trajectory of the machine in replacing "the human body with a technology that enables the same process to be performed with more continuity and control." As one worker put it: the computer "takes the human factor out of running the machine." Work itself becomes abstract. And concomitantly workers experience loss of control and loss of ac-

(Continued on page 89)

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Anne Porter

IN CHARTRES

Through fields of ripe wheat
In France, in the heart of France
We've come on foot from Paris
To these incredible stones
To this tidal wave of the Sabbath
Rising up out of the wheat
With its village gathered around it
To its portals crowded with prophets
With patriarchs and with martyrs
Tall in the long folds
Of their carven robes.

This one is Abraham
With one hand he's holding the knife
The knife of sacrifice
And with his other hand
He's tenderly cupping the cheek
Of Isaac, his little son
There's a look of calm wonder
On the face of his little son
And under his feet is the ram
The ram who will take his place
As the victim of sacrifice

Abraham, it's you especially
Whom I have come to see
You are our father in faith
In this knapsack on my back
I'm bringing you all the deaths
That I can't understand
And not the deaths alone
But also the pain
The deaths from all the famines
From holocaust and war
And every unjust death
Of the innocent and the humble.

To take the place of the child
Isaac there was a ram
But for all of those others
There was no ram

And I lay down all these deaths
I lay them down at your feet
So that you can keep them for me
Since by myself
I am unable
To understand them.

* * *

Inside the portal a young
Girl from a nearby farm, a girl
Slight as a minnow
Tugs at the heavy bell-rope
To sound the Angelus
She has to lift her bare feet off
The flagstones, and throw her head
Way back, her long brown braids
Are swinging backwards
And high above her
In the belfry shaggy with tiles
The ancient bell obeys her
The pigeons that live in the towers
Wheel up into the sky
The air rocks and trembles
And the slow notes of the bell
Open into the sky
Till they lose themselves in the air
And sink down into the wheat
Among the poppies and cornflowers
Beside the skylark's nest.

* * *

Once long ago
In the French countryside
In the province of Oise

I came on a little church
That for some reason
Was deep in the fields
And away from the village

It had a statue of Mary
Like something made by a child

And on Mary's altar
In a jar of water
There was a bunch of daisies
Which someone must have gathered
That same morning

And in the rough shell
Of the whitewashed nave
There was a stone coolness

And a mysterious fragrance
That light bitter fragrance
Of the rural
Churches of France

It could be a scent of hops
Of some hidden yeast or lichen
But I don't know

It's the scent of a secret world
A secret of the fields
That's here too in the porches
Of Our Lady of Chartres.

* * *

We've gone through the leather doors
We've entered the forest of praise
There in the high half darkness
We see its constellations
We see the glowing embers
Of a dark fire
We see the lancet windows
And the great North Rose
Whose blue is blue
As blood is red
Whose red is radiant

Father you have allowed us
For once you have permitted us
To make a thing so beautiful
As to be no less beautiful
Than your own Creation.

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(Continued from page 87)
tion-centered, sentient, and tacit competencies acquired over long years of being on the job. New "intellective" competencies then become necessary.

The second, or *informating*, aspect of computer-mediated work not only translates work operations into an explicit electronic text (the program), but it even generates new information and a data base revealing the past and present state of any given work operation. Such data becomes transparent: it can be shared; it can be centralized or decentralized; it can be manipulated, that is, changed or linked to other data bases.

Zuboff is aware that her own observations and interview material are embedded in two important historical processes: the changing role of the human body in blue- and white-collar jobs, and the evolution of managerial thought. In arguing that "the history of work has been, in part, the history of the worker's body," she shows how the role of the body as the source of energy and skill has been transformed by the advent of the smart machine. Data banks and electronic texts increasingly expropriate the skills of both industrial and service workers. Two possibilities follow: one is the increasing impoverishment (deskilling) of work activities; the other, more promising, is "a more comprehensive understanding [by the worker] of one's work in an elaborated language that introduces the possibilities of questions, choice, and innovation."

The first possibility leads in the direction of centralization and control; that is, it exploits the automating function of the smart machine to foster traditional managerial privileges. The second option leads in the opposite direction of decentralization and the formation of an open organization that democratizes skills in the interests of maximizing the informating function of the new technologies.

Most managers are likely to favor the first possibility and try to maintain the traditional division of labor by emphasizing an ideology of control that minimizes training efforts for workers. This strategy is likely to have only a short-term success, as Zuboff argues, because the autonomous processes of the new information technologies can be slowed down, but eventually they will blur the boundaries of knowledge and responsibility between workers and managers. As workers become skilled in the use of "smart machines," their knowledge will undermine traditional authority structures.

In the Age of the Smart Machine touches here on a discussion that has its counterpart in a lively debate among European industrial sociologists. In their recent study, Michael Kern and Horst Schumann (*Das Ende der Arbeitsteilung?* Munich: Beck, 1984) point to the emergence of "new production concepts" in key industries—auto, chemical, and machine tools. These new concepts reflect changing managerial assumptions which hold that greater local work autonomy and more wholistic job descriptions are self-reenforcing and present opportunities for increased productivity because they take advantage of higher skills, greater work competence, and stronger motivation. This perspective corresponds to Zuboff's second option, which she describes as the creation of a post-hierarchical learning environment. The dilemmas for managers in such a project are fairly evident: drastic changes in managerial (especially middle-managerial) roles; in the division of labor; in data sharing and, therefore, control of information; and in responsibilities and remuneration.

> *Information technology creates an epistemological crisis, altering the grounds of task-related knowledge and the basis for competent participation in the life of the organization. If the informating process is to be exploited for its competitive opportunities then widely distributed mastery over the new intellectual grounds of knowledge becomes an acute demand. For this to occur, organizational innovation is required.*
>
> —*Shoshona Zuboff*
> The Smart Machine

Another interesting aspect of information technology discussed by Zuboff is

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the functions and dysfunctions found in the different uses of telecommunication. A playful use of computer conferencing techniques has led to both an increase in intra-organizational communication and the creation of zones of freedom, which the French industrial psychologist Gustave N. Fischer has described as forms of "clandestine self-management." The ingenuity of the human mind in staking out subversive zones of independence, freedom, and self-control seems to thrive even under conditions of the total informating environment that often begets the fear of the totally transparent "glass man."

Zuboff's otherwise rich and revealing book is a bit short on prescriptions on how to steer the processes of introducing new technologies in the workplace. Is it too early in the history of smart machines to offer specific advice? Her suggestion that organized efforts be made to specify the rights and entitlements of those who work in these new conditions has as yet found little support in the U.S. In contrast to U.S. industrial relations, however, almost all Western European countries have statutory rules and regulations that require the representation within companies of employee groups. These are meant to articulate the workers' interests in company negotiations, mediation, and conflict resolution, including those involved with introducing new information technologies. □

PILGRIMS OF CONSCIENCE

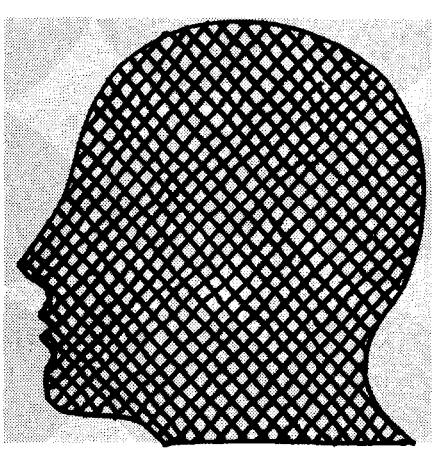
TAKING A CHANCE ON GOD
John J. McNeill
Beacon, $17.95, 213 pp.

THE CHURCH AND THE HOMOSEXUAL
Third Edition
John J. McNeill
Beacon, $9.95 paper, 266 pp.

James A. O'Donohoe

On December 29, 1975, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) published a document entitled *Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics*. Regarding homosexuality, the following observations were made: (1) those who would judge indulgently or even excuse homosexual relations do so in opposition to the moral sense of the Christian people and the constant teaching of the official church; (2) a distinction must be made between those homosexuals whose tendency comes from false education, a lack of normal sexual development, or from other remediable causes, and those homosexuals who are definitively such because of irreversible, innate instinct or incurable pathological condition; (3) according to a Christian understanding of the moral order, homosexual acts lack an essential finality, are therefore intrinsically disordered, and can be approved of in no case whatsoever; (4) pastorally, homosexuals are to be treated with understanding and their culpability should be judged with prudence.

Early in 1976, with the *imprimi potest* of his Jesuit provincial superior, John McNeill published *The Church and the Homosexual* (Sheed, Andrews & McMeel). In this book, McNeill took



issue with three positions which he asserts (without specific reference and careful nuancing) dominated the thinking of moral theologians: (1) "the homosexual condition, and subsequently all homosexual activity, is contrary to the will of God"; (2) "the presence of the homosexual in the human community is a menace to that community, and especially a threat to the values of the family"; (3) "the love which unites two homosexuals in a sexual union is a sinful love which separates them from the love of God and places them in danger of eternal damnation."

McNeill also advances the thesis that "there is a possibility of morally good homosexual relationships and that the love which unites the partners in such a relationship, rather than alienating them from God, can be judged as uniting them more closely with God and as mediating God's presence in our world." In other words, he is of the opinion that there can be "ethically responsible homosexual relationships" and he would define the latter as those which are built on relationships which are "unselfish and constructive."

In 1978, McNeill was notified by his Jesuit superiors that the CDF had ordered the *imprimi potest* removed from future editions and demanded that he be prohibited from any further writing or lecturing on the question of homosexuality. For many years, he faithfully observed this silencing. However, in 1985, shortly after he addressed the annual convention of Dignity, the national Catholic homosexual rights group, he was informed by his provincial that the Vatican Congregation had decreed that he was to "withdraw from any and all ministry to homosexual persons." After an anguished period of struggle with his conscience, McNeill told his Jesuit superiors that he felt called to continue his ministry to the homosexual community and intended to do so. They replied that they had no alternative but to dismiss him from the Society of Jesus. The final decree of dismissal was issued on April 13, 1987.

In substance and argumentation, this third edition of *The Church and the Homosexual* is practically identical with

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the 1976 original, except for three added appendices and a new preface. In appendix one, the author recommends some goals for the pastoral counseling of homosexuals that he has learned from his therapeutic practice with gay and lesbian clients. Appendix two contains some theological and pastoral reflections provoked by the new dimension introduced by the AIDS crisis. The final appendix offers a fairly comprehensive history of how the book came to be reprinted at this particular time. One would have hoped that the author would have revised the first edition. Such is not the case.

McNeill basically argues that a "genuine homosexual" can morally enter into a responsible homogenital relationship involving stability and faithful love. But in his opinion the task of specifically defining such a relationship is to be left to the Christian homosexual in question. In this regard, it seems to me that McNeill fails to address adequately what studies show to be more prevalent than fidelity among members of the gay community, namely, the question of homosexual promiscuity.

McNeill describes his new book, *Taking a Chance on God,* as a "liberating theology for gays, lesbians and their lovers, families, and friends." It attempts to formulate a theology and a spirituality rooted in the real life experience of homosexuals, designed not only to meet their special needs (to "dispel the shadow of guilt and self-hatred") but also to inform the pastoral action that they are to undertake in the world in which they live. As McNeill points out in much detail, this book took shape as a result of "thousands of hours . . . spent as a psychotherapist sharing the pain and joy, struggles and triumphs of my lesbian and gay clients as they strove to put together their lives as both gay and Christian."

The book articulately presents many of the basic truths of Christianity: the call to intimacy with God, the importance of developing a mature faith, the necessity of dealing with fear and anger, the need to cope with the burden of guilt, shame, and self-hatred, the Christian's relationship with Mary, the advantages of reflection on one's mortality, and the challenge of living in a society that is primarily heterosexual. The author hopes that reflection on these basic truths may evoke a "spiritual liberation" that will enable homosexuals to "break into history with a new positive self-consciousness."

The presuppositions, however, are identical with the three theses proposed in *The Church and the Homosexual.* As before, McNeill holds that genital homosexual relationships can be ethically responsible not only in the subjective order of personal conscience (something that most moral theologians would admit) but also in the perspective of the Christian tradition's understanding of human nature (something that the official teaching of the church categorically rejects).

In Roman Catholic moral theology, a distinction has always been drawn between objective norm and subjective guilt, and hence between wrongdoing and sinfulness (or between performing a disvalue and doing so with culpability). Ignoring this distinction can be very misleading. For instance, in the preface to *Taking a Chance on God,* we read that "The church's traditional position has been that *since every homosexual act is sinful* and contrary to God's plan, the love that exists between gay and lesbian people is *sinful and alienates the lovers from God*" (emphasis added). Such a statement only contributes to popular misunderstanding. Coming from one who has studied moral theology, it is not only surprising; it is also downright incorrect!

In both of his books, John McNeill is not satisfied with the traditional distinction between sin and wrongdoing. He asserts that "genuine homosexuals who engage in genital relations" are doing something not merely subjectively defensible but something objectively virtuous for them. Herein lies his difficulty with the teaching of the Catholic church as it was recently reiterated by Vatican documents.

In trying to formulate a pastoral approach in the light of an apparently severe disciplinary church teaching, one

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must always be careful not to fudge the latter in attempting to do the former. In this regard, the wise statement of Richard McCormick, S.J., has particular relevance: "[G]enuine morality, while always compassionate and understanding in its meeting with individual distress, must remain prophetic and demanding in the norms through which it invites to a better humanity; for if it ceases to do this, it simply collapses the pastoral and the official teaching and in so doing ceases to be truly human because it barters the good that will liberate and humanize for the compromise that will merely comfort."

John McNeill is quite correct in urging the church, today more than ever, to work out a compassionate pastoral theology to guide her dealings with Christians who are constitutive homosexuals. And he is to be commended for his contribution toward this pastoral end. The flaw lies elsewhere. I cannot argue the point here (as it deserves to be argued in detail), but I think he fudges the issue in failing to articulate his pastoral approach sufficiently *within* the context of the traditional Christian understanding of the human person and the nature and purpose of human sexuality that have been historically developed by the church and staunchly defended by the Second Vatican Council. □

RECANTATIONS & EQUIVOCATIONS

THE COMPANY WE KEEP
An Ethics of Fiction
Wayne C. Booth
California, $23.95, 480 pp.

Martin Green

The subtitle of this book, *An Ethics of Fiction*, refers us to the author's famous *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, of 1961; in which he extended to fiction the formalist criticism which had had its early successes in the field of poetry. This new book is a recantation and reversal of the old one, as is signaled by substituting a tentative "An" for the categorical "The," as well as the humanist "Ethics" for the programmatic "Rhetoric."

This is a big book, of nearly five hundred pages, and presents many kinds of writing; some as formal as Booth's old style, others strikingly informal. He alludes to a book and tells us he can't remember the title. Many pages are confessional. We meet the author's wife. There are jokes, colloquialisms, tricks (he discusses a poem, then tells us he made it up, then tells us he didn't) and the whole ends with the tune of an Ajax commercial. This is the genial and relaxed aspect of an argument which intends to be the instrument of truth, but a different kind of truth from that served by the rigorous demonstrations of *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. This instrument differs by including both a personal confession of the white racism and the male chauvinism which hid within that rigorous discipline; and a strategy for avoiding such self-deceit in the future. He is including more of life in the discussion of literature, and is thinking laterally and discontinuously, rather than lineally and progressively.

There is much excellent argument here, but the positive prescriptions of *The Company We Keep* are necessarily quite familiar. We must think of the characters in stories as like real people; we must set the individual work in the class it belongs in, and compare our experience of it with that of other qualified people as we rank it; and we must feel free to endorse traditional values in response to a moral problem.

It is easy to agree to all this, but I have a feeling of let-down when I read Booth's moral commentaries; perhaps because he can't be strikingly affirmative or negative. He can only raise questions; might it not be bad for a graduate student to choose de Sade as a thesis topic? His questions are good ones, but the interrogative mode is terribly tentative.

Ethical criticism can only remind us of the limits of the liberal consensus, the liberal imagination, in the sense Trilling gave that phrase. The intoxications of theory, the masterfulness of linear argument, enabled us to forget that consensus and its limits. We are better off knowing, not ignoring, a limiting truth, but we cannot simply remind each other of it day after day. We must combine that with investigating something new. Ethical criticism, if it reduces to worry over other people's responses, is surely only half of what criticism can be; and was. Booth is dismantling the enterprise more than he need; or more than *we* need.

The most interesting aspect of *The Company We Keep* I found to be the fragments of intellectual autobiography Booth gives us. His first work was on *Tristram Shandy*, and he still loves that book, but now he sees the masculinism of Sterne's humor.

In this book he discusses two comparable cases in some detail: Rabelais and Donne, writers he loved, and expected women friends and students to love equally. Now he sees them as offensive to women. His section on Rabelais is titled "Rabelais's Masculine Laughter"; and he tells how at his first reading of the humiliation of the Lady of Paris, he was "transported with laughter and rushed to tell my (male) friends about it." The scholar's study was opening a door into the locker room.

I don't somehow imagine F.R.Leavis or Lionel Trilling so transported with masculine laughter; and there is generally a wide gap between them and Booth. The first he mentions a few times, as being of a type he and his friends regarded as "dogmatic mavericks...the last remnants of a moralistic, pre-aesthetic past...." The second he barely alludes to; although some aspects of this book's argument are very like the ethical conservatism of the later Trilling.

The difference between the two types of critic is seen in the company they kept, as young men. For Booth, it was Joyce, and Joyce as Stephen Dedalus, with whom he chose to spend his time. He

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> *In pursuing now the metaphor of* people meeting *as they share stories....we can hope that it may release a kind of critical conversation too often inhibited by more mechanized pictures of texts/webs/prison houses/mazes/codes/rule systems/speech systems/semantic structures. Perhaps most obviously, this metaphor spontaneously revives a kind of talk, once almost universal, about the types of friendship or companionship a book provides* as *it is read.*
>
> —Wayne Booth
> *The Company We Keep*

quotes a passage from *Ulysses* , and describes his own feelings as he read it first, at nineteen. He felt "completely outclassed....I can also remember clearly a sense of envy and awe—not of Joyce but of Dedalus. If only my own stream of consciousness could flow at that high philosophical level."

That is of course how Joyce wants us to respond (and we must thank Booth for writing it down and putting his signature to it) but that always seemed to me why one cannot respond to the passage as intended. It is such a blatant piece of self-advertising, for such a blatantly "intellectual" self, that one turns away from Joyce in embarrassment.

I would guess that Trilling and Leavis would have agreed with me about that. Those two spent most of their time with D.H.Lawrence, and in some sense learned to be like Rupert Birkin, in *Women in Love*, rather than like Dedalus. Booth as a young man could not abide Lawrence, and one of his recantations here is of that distaste. The section is called "Confessions of a Lukewarm Lawrentian," and his conversion is far from wholehearted; but the point is that it has been the work of a lifetime.

Booth took Dedalus as his model in justifying his own revolt against an "oppressive" upbringing. But when he traces the decay of ethical criticism from Johnson and Arnold to its death under "high modernism," that last is a phrase he has used for Joyce. Turning back now, he begins to see some point to Arnold's long-mocked ideas about poetry. Leavis and Trilling, of course, remained loyal to Arnold; as of course they practiced ethical criticism all their lives, without calling it that.

By the same token, they remained much more equivocal than Booth in the face of "high modernism"; and were much less hearty in their masculinism. High modernism of Booth's kind was, paradoxically, a natural heir or eager bride to American frontier masculinism. We see that in the fiction of Faulkner and Hemingway, and in the criticism of Henry Nash Smith and Booth on Mark Twain.

This book begins and ends with the case of *Huckleberry Finn*, where again Booth has to recant; having been taught in the 1960s to see the offensiveness of Twain's treatment of Jim; not having felt before the way the book truckles to the prejudices of its first readers.

Apparently it needed the protest of black readers to make some white scholars see that point; as apparently it needed the protest of women readers to make them see the objection to Rabelais. But frankly I don't know why such intervention was necessary; or rather the explanation is that unholy male bonding of the literary critic to the frontier humorist.

That marriage is now declared dissolved, it seems. And if it needed a theory of ethical criticism to cut the knot, we must be glad we got one as genial and clever as this. But I think the actual practice of ethical criticism in the past is a better guide to how to avoid the mistakes of "rhetoric" in the future. □

UP AGAINST THE POWERS THAT BE

SOPHISTICATED REBELS
The Political Culture of European Dissent (1968-1987)
H. Stuart Hughes
Harvard, $20, 192 pp.

THE COMPANY OF CRITICS
Social Criticism and Political Commitment in the Twentieth Century
Michael Walzer
Basic, $19.95, 260 pp.

John P. Diggins

Both books under review are written by American intellectuals seeking roles for the intellectual in the modern world, and both, with a single rare exception, look to European thinkers to provide the heroic models. H. Stuart Hughes's *Sophisticated Rebels* involves stances taken by dissident intellectuals since the dramatic events in 1968 in Paris and Prague. After the first brush with the brute realities of power, dissenters learned to be more patient, cautious, sensitive to the tenacity of mass opinion and the structural impediments to change—a stance that often defied conventional categories of both the left and right.

Michael Walzer's *The Company of Critics* spans a wider chronological range and deals with intellectuals trying to establish the values upon which criticism of the existing social order can be legitimately made. In two previous works, *Spheres of Justice* and *Theory and Social Criticism*, Walzer insisted that the critic must not impose transcendent, universal standards but instead draw upon implicit principles and values embedded in the conventions of the everyday world. Hughes shares that sentiment, and it is not a little curious that both authors, though writing from a left perspective, seem more devoted to restoration than revolution.

Their treatment of Michel Foucault reveals much about their political priorities. Walzer believes that Foucault—perhaps the most widely read French au-

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thor in America since Tocqueville—is "not a purposeful social critic" because he illuminates the ubiquity of power only to imply the futility of opposing it. Hughes suggests that Foucault, Jacques LaCan, Jacques Derrida, and other Parisians who wrote within the structuralist and post-structuralist idioms charmed their avid readers with "wordplay" but had little to say about the real world of events other than to uncover the deceptions of power and the plight of marginal misfits. While the post-structuralists probed texts, other Parisian students and intellectuals awoke to the world of the Gulag and Kampuchea.

Hughes believes that a surer guide to political culture, as opposed to academic paradigms, may be found in the novels of Michel Tournier and Milan Kundera. Born in Paris, raised a Catholic, and steeped in German culture and philosophy, Tournier writes of characters who transcended the stereotypes of virility and femininity. Kundera, an exile from the "Prague Spring" now living in Paris, writes of the uprooted, weak, and humiliated. Since existence offered nothing certain and foreordained, only the "unbearable lightness of being," history must provide what Hughes aptly calls "an unremitting effort of memory." Both Tournier and Kundera call for the restoration of Europe's cultural unity while finding solace in laughter.

Readers of *Commonweal* may be surprised to see Pope John Paul II included among the "sophisticated rebels." But in his confrontations with the dissident theologians Edward Schillebeeckx and Hans Küng, the pope found himself, according to Hughes, in the thankless position of trying to satisfy both the conservative clergy who suspected him of tolerating innovation and the "progressives" who regarded him as too prudent and cautious. Pressured from both sides, the pope once exclaimed to a visiting papal diplomat: "Now I understand St. Peter, who came to Rome twice, the second time to be crucified." Hughes sees John Paul II being just as much a dissident as the liberation theologians. Why didn't the pope tradeoff political liberation for adherence to theological dogma?

We can begin to understand why if we think of the pope too as a rebel, a rebel against the evil he saw in the soulless world of contemporary urban existence. Consider his a voice crying in the wilderness, one whose rebelliousness took forms difficult for the Western mind to comprehend: a stern, self-denying notion of the priesthood; a corresponding notion of a special role for women, modeled on the shining example of Mary; a revulsion from tampering with procreation. To appreciate John Paul II in his own dimension it was necessary to visualize him in his native land.

That land would witness, a year after his elevation to the papacy, the birth of Solidarity. The "miracle" of Gdansk saw a rare alliance of workers, intellectuals, and the church. Hughes offers a valuable discussion of the "self-limiting" revolution inspired by the discharged electrician Lech Walesa and sustained by the writings of the historian Adam Michnik.

Dissent in the Soviet Union, Hughes notes, differed from that in Poland. Russian intellectuals have yet to reject Marxist ideology while the Poles placed their faith in religion and patriotism. The exception, of course, was Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who saw Marxism as the sin of Western liberalism and called for a return to Russia's slavophile traditions. No matter how conservative Solzhenitsyn's sentiments, he too, like Kundera and other dissidents, wanted "to restore unity to his divided and suffering people."

Walzer's idea of the social critic is also, curiously enough, more sensitive to unity and continuity, more inclined to find old values than to create new ones. He thus upholds as exemplary the "connected critic," the anguished observer who is not so much detached and alienated from his native land as he is devoted to recovering its lost ideals. Walzer's heroes are Ignazio Silone, who tried to revitalize an inherited tradition rather than a created conception in order to render compatible simple Christian morality with modern socialism; George Orwell, who combined "radicalism" and "rootedness" by embracing such homespun virtues as patriotism, decency, and even consumer comforts; and Randolph Bourne (the one American thinker), who debated John Dewey over American intervention in World War I and denounced American politics to better defend the "American promise." Walzer is less enamored of Herbert Marcuse, who excoriated Americans as "one-dimensional" simply because they took pleasure in acquisition and consumption; and Simone de Beauvoir, who

REVIEWERS

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sympathized with the oppressed status of women only to distance herself from them as victims of biological entrapment. The "Africaner radical" Breyton Breytenbach is admired as a poet exiled from South Africa yet still committed to the anti-apartheid resistance, however uncertain its future. Walzer also has insightful things to say about Martin Buber, Albert Camus, and Julien Benda, author of the timeless tract, *The Betrayal of the Intellectuals*.

Ultimately Walzer faces the same problem as Antonio Gramsci, the brilliant Sardinian Marxist who also exhorted intellectuals to return home to native grounds. Walzer praises Gramsci's "commitment" to a policy of practical activity that would fuse intellectuals and workers in a dialectic of mind and body. But Gramsci's idea of "organic intellectuals" would have been anathema to Walzer's other hero, Randolph Bourne. Along with other voices of the Greenwich Village rebellion, Bourne looked to a "transnational" America based upon the liberating values of cosmopolitanism. Nativism, in contrast, signified everything reactionary: Puritanism and repression, the frontier and escapist individualism, capitalism and the commercialization of life. Perhaps the only American intellectuals who could agree with the notion of the "connected critic" would have been "the Southern Agrarians" of the thirties. But I am not sure Walzer would want to be in the "company" of such critics. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 66)

also grateful to him for helping me continue to ask "Who am I?" in more freedom and hope than the Vatican has ever offered me. JOAN SEXTON

Never disappointing

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: When my issue comes, I always turn immediately to John Garvey's column. I can always count on Garvey to be a sexist pig, and am never disappointed with the cute-ass way he has of discrediting women in the church or those who are attempting to become more conscious of sexism.

In the December 16 issue—to note the latest example—Garvey calls "The Desert Fathers" the "common term" and uses it because he is too self- righteous to use a consciously non-sexist, inclusive term. John baby, it may be a common term to you, but it describes only who it describes to me; i.e., fathers are fathers and mothers are mothers. And I can't believe that an otherwise terrific magazine lets you get away with being such a consistent, chronic sexist. Don't *you* have an editor? You need one.

IRMA LEVESQUE

The author replies:

Joan Sexton and I are pretty far apart. Although my argument does not please her, it should not be distorted. I am willing to accept the current Orthodox and Catholic discipline with regard to the ordination of women; the question should also be explored seriously. I did not say that a woman, if she feels a divine call to priesthood, should have a talk with a monk. I said that *anyone* who felt such a call, male or female, should talk with a non-ordained monk or nun. Ms. Sexton says that she has felt the call to priesthood, and I do not deny that her feelings are deep and genuine. My question is whether their origin is necessarily divine. Our theology of ordination differs, and would, even if the church were to ordain women. I stand by the attitude of many early Christians, whose practice indicated that the call comes not from God but from the Christian community, each of whose members is called to the fullness of Christian life and service through baptism. The lay beginnings of the monastic movement are not irrelevant.

As far as Matthew Fox is concerned, to call foolish writing foolish is not "bashing," it's accurate. Fox's dismissals of the thought of the church fathers (which he seriously misrepresents) and his distortion of Eckhart (which continues in his self-serving *New York Times* advertisement of December 14) should be pointed out and opposed. A reading of the New Testament makes it clear that it really is about redemption, which involves suffering and the cross as an integral part of what, finally, the Resurrection *is*. The Sermon on the Mount makes more mention of hell than Fox is likely to find attractive, and implies the necessity of an asceticism which he doesn't like—too "dualistic." None of this detracts from the glory of creation, nor has any orthodox writer urged that idea; but without redemption we can't participate in that glory, or even see creation, with the freedom and clarity we must struggle to attain.

As far as Ms. Levesque is concerned, I am always happy never to be disappointing. JOHN GARVEY

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Kirkridge Weekend

The Company at Kirkridge, an inclusive network of contemporary Christians will have a weekend with Willis Elliott on *Scrupulous Godlessness*, a look at our current American polarization on God-talk in public. Join us to worship, support and stimulate inward-outward journeys. For more information write Anthony Ciccariello, 520 W. Gray Street, Elmira, New York 14905.

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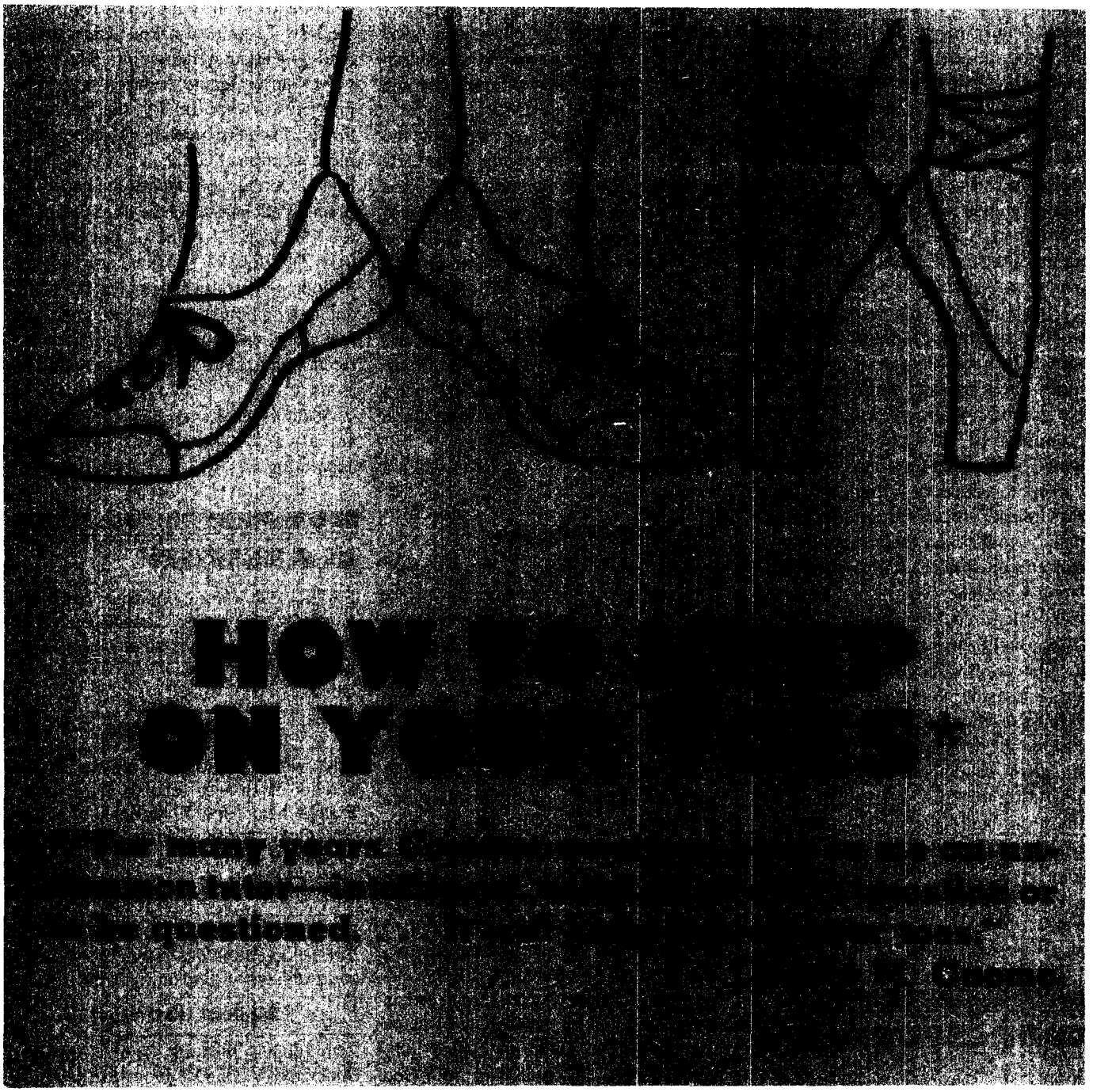

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